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Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Seychelles

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Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its twenty-fourth session from 18 to 29 January 2016. The review of Seychelles was held at the 11th meeting on 25 January 2016. The delegation of Seychelles was headed by Ambassador Barry Faure (Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs Department). At its 17th meeting, held on 28 January 2016, the Working Group adopted the report on Seychelles.

2. On 12 January 2016, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Seychelles: Albania, Kenya and Portugal.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Seychelles:

(a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/24/SYC/1);

(b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/24/SYC/2);

(c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/24/SYC/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Germany, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was transmitted to Seychelles through the troika. These questions are available on the extranet of the universal periodic review.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The delegation of Seychelles explained that Seychelles was a young republic and a multiparty democracy, built upon the foundations of a strong culture of respect for human rights, social justice, equality and non-discrimination. It added that, since its previous universal periodic review, in 2011, significant strides had been made in terms of the promotion and protection of human rights.

6. Regarding the rights of the child, the delegation noted that Seychelles was committed to ensuring that such rights were fully respected, promoted and protected. In February 2015, the Government of Seychelles had set up a dedicated police child protection team, which specialized in child protection cases and responded to instances of neglect and child abuse, allowing such cases to be processed by law enforcement in an efficient manner. The delegation added that numerous sensitization programmes continued to be held on preventing and combating child abuse and that a juvenile detention centre was currently under development.

7. The delegation reported that Seychelles had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and had also signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

8. In terms of education, the delegation stated that Seychelles provided free primary and secondary education to all children and that compulsory secondary schooling had been increased by one year as of 2016, bringing the total years of compulsory education to 11. It also mentioned the medium-term strategy on education for the period 2013-2017 and beyond, which ensured that necessary investments were made in the sector of education.

9. The delegation noted that Seychelles remained fully committed to fighting violence against women through prevention, protection and prosecution. In that regard, the national action plan for gender-based violence for the period 2011-2015 focused on a review and harmonization of existing laws on gender-based violence, the sensitization of front-line enforcement officials, public education campaigns and mainstreaming of gender perspectives into national development plans. The delegation highlighted the fact that the Government of Seychelles was in the process of developing specific legislation on domestic violence, with regard to which wide consultation was taking place.

10. The delegation reported the enactment of the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act in 2014, which formalized legislative and administrative measures to effectively combat that crime, as well as the establishment of a national coordination committee on trafficking in persons.

11. The delegation recalled that Seychelles had undergone a free, fair and peaceful presidential election process in December 2014, whereby the incumbent President, James Alix Michel, had been re-elected. The elections had been observed by local, regional and international organizations. The delegation explained that, since the first universal periodic review of Seychelles, a fully fledged electoral commission had been established and the Elections Act and Political Parties Act had been modified.

12. Regarding the right of freedom of expression, the delegation noted that licence fees to operate media establishments had been significantly reduced through legislative amendments. It added that there had been an increase in the number of newspaper outlets, as well as the opening of a new radio station and the introduction of a new Internet protocol television system. Furthermore, Seychelles was starting to work on legislation on access to information.

13. The delegation noted that Seychelles had launched its third national drug control master plan in 2014, which had been developed in recognition of the need for a coherent and holistic national response.

14. The delegation reported that Seychelles had established a national AIDS council to improve upon the national response to HIV/AIDS. A policy entitled "test and treat" had also been put in place in 2014, as part of the global strategy to reach zero deaths from HIV and AIDS infection by the year 2030.

15. The delegation stated that health education, including sex education, was provided to children in school. Furthermore, Seychelles was currently in the process of finalizing two documents: the national policy on sexual and reproductive health and the national adolescent sexual reproductive health policy, which were aimed at responding effectively to the various sexual health challenges of the country.

16. The delegation noted that Seychelles remained committed to fostering non-discrimination and equality for persons with disabilities. For instance, the national employment policy promoted employment without discrimination, including for persons with disabilities. The delegation added that the Government was in the final stages of approving the national policy and strategic framework for disability, which was designed to empower persons with disabilities to claim their rights as citizens, and to change stereotypes regarding such persons.

17. The delegation stated that the authorities were reviewing the National Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman of Seychelles, in order to strengthen both institutions. Seychelles looked forward to having a national human rights institution which was fully compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the "Paris Principles").

18. Regarding the penitentiary system, the delegation noted that the main prison had been refurbished, and now included, among other things, a medical facility, an auditorium, a classroom, a library, a gymnasium and a laundry room. A unit for vulnerable prisoners, such as those who were at risk of harm, persons with disabilities and elderly persons, was also under construction. The delegation added that numerous measures had been put in place for prisoners' rehabilitation, including the resettlement day release programme and an outreach programme, which allowed prisoners to leave the prison to do voluntary work in the community.

19. The delegation reported that, following universal periodic review recommendations received in 2011, Seychelles had issued a standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders. Since then, Seychelles had hosted the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education and the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children. Both rapporteurs had issued recommendations which the Government was in the process of implementing.

20. The delegation recalled that the Seychelles Human Rights Treaty Committee had been established in 2012. That coordinative committee, composed of governmental and non-governmental agencies, was primarily tasked with assisting in the preparation of treaty reports, ensuring the dissemination of treaties and treaty body recommendations and promoting the conformity of national laws with accepted human rights standards. The delegation reported that, since its previous review, Seychelles had submitted reports under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Reports to other treaty bodies under the corresponding conventions were also being finalized.

21. The delegation added that the Seychelles Human Rights Treaty Committee was also charged with overseeing the development of a five-year national action plan on human rights, which should be adopted and implemented very soon.

22. The delegation took the opportunity of the universal periodic review to present its call for the world to pay attention to the issue of protecting the environment, especially reducing gas emissions, given the irrefutable link between climate change, the environment and human rights. The delegation further called for that issue to continue being formally and urgently addressed under the legal frameworks of the United Nations and the Human Rights Council. The delegation reported the creation a new governmental department for climate change and energy, as well the adoption of numerous measures and projects to mitigate the effects of climate change in Seychelles, which included flood mitigation, increased drainage and recharging sandbanks.

23. The delegation noted that Seychelles had been advocating the concept of the blue economy, which referred to those economic activities which directly or indirectly took place in the ocean and in coastal areas and used outputs from the ocean, as well as the contribution of those activities to economic growth and social, cultural and environmental well-being. A new blue economy department had been established under the governmental structure to implement that goal.

24. To conclude, the delegation stated that Seychelles remained dedicated to progress and improvement in human rights and would continue working with civil society and the National Human Rights Commission in the follow-up to the dialogue.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

25. During the interactive dialogue, 60 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of the present report.

26. The United Arab Emirates welcomed the progress achieved in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and the efforts of the Government to uphold children's rights, such as the adoption of a national plan for child protection and the setting up of awareness programmes to combat violence against children.

27. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland applauded Seychelles for its recent presidential election, which had been peaceful but contested. It welcomed the replacement of the Public Order Act with more progressive legislation. It expressed concern that the National Human Rights Commission did not comply with the Paris Principles.

28. The United States of America noted the recent presidential election with the participation of international and local observers but was concerned by reports that some candidates had not been able to exercise freedom of expression and association. It commended the Constitutional Court's decision to strike down the Public Order Act.

29. Uruguay commended Seychelles for extending a standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders and receiving two rapporteurs. It expressed concern about the absence of a definition and an explicit prohibition of discrimination against women. It welcomed the fact that the Education Act was being revised to eliminate corporal punishment of children in schools.

30. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela recognized the efforts of the Government to implement the recommendations of its first universal periodic review despite the delicate situation generated by climate change. It welcomed the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the implementation of the national plan to combat domestic violence.

31. Zambia welcomed the appointment of women in decision-making positions and the measures taken to prevent violence against women. It regretted the fact that the police could detain a person for 24 hours without charge, that domestic violence was not criminalized and that there was a high prevalence of sexual exploitation.

32. Zimbabwe welcomed the constant improvement of existing human rights legislation by Seychelles. It commended a number of measures to protect the rights of women, including the appointment of women to high-level decision-making positions and the adoption of a national plan to combat gender-based violence.

33. Algeria commended Seychelles for the important reforms adopted since 2011 with regard to the fight against human trafficking, the protection of the environment, food security of the population and management of disasters. It noted with satisfaction the efforts to strengthen economic, social and cultural rights.

34. Angola appreciated the determination with which Seychelles continued to review and strengthen its national legislation to make it compatible with the promotion and protection of human rights. Angola supported Seychelles in its efforts to combat crime and amend its penal code in relation to the minimum age of crime.

35. Argentina welcomed the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations received during the first cycle, in particular the measures taken to improve the education system and to guarantee the right to education.

36. Australia noted the recent focus on good governance and encouraged the Government to ensure that democracy and the rule of law were upheld through transparent,

strong, effective and independent institutions, including the Human Rights Commission. It expressed concern regarding freedom of expression and commended efforts to address domestic violence.

37. Benin appreciated the national framework plan against drugs for the period 2014-2018, the advancement of gender equality in national development plans, the appointment of women to high-level decision making positions, the national action plan for gender-based violence for the period 2011-2015 and the enactment of the law on domestic violence.

38. Botswana noted policies addressing human trafficking, gender-based violence, education, food security and the administration of justice. It welcomed the police child protection team and asked for more information on how the team operated and whether it had registered any significant achievements. Reports of judicial corruption were still worrying.

39. Brazil welcomed the national gender policy and plan of action and the *Gender and Law Manual*. It was pleased about progress in the penitentiary system of Seychelles, including the opportunity for inmates to take courses and implementation of the resettlement day release and outreach programmes. It acknowledged amendment of the Probation of Offenders Act.

40. Burundi welcomed measures concerning the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities and the right to health. It congratulated Seychelles for establishing the Seychelles Human Rights Treaty Committee and its cooperation with treaty bodies and the special procedure mandate holders, to whom it had issued a standing invitation.

41. Cabo Verde noted that the national action plan on human rights would be an important framework for human rights efforts. Institutional solutions concerning the right to information and independence of the media should be pursued. Cabo Verde hoped that the small island State of Seychelles would benefit from substantial international cooperation.

42. Canada commended Seychelles for its commitment to the principles of equal opportunity and social justice through targeted social programmes and investments in health care and education. It encouraged continued efforts in those areas.

43. Chad noted that Seychelles was a party to most of the international legal instruments and cooperated with treaty bodies, both at the regional and international levels. It also noted the country's legislative and institutional framework to strengthen the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities, as well as the media.

44. Chile valued the information contained in the national report that reflected progress in the area of human rights.

45. China appreciated the efforts made by Seychelles to implement first-cycle recommendations related to the enhancement of human rights mechanisms and the rule of law, and to improve cooperation with human rights bodies. It noted the progress achieved in the enjoyment of the rights to education and health.

46. On the comment made on children's participation, the delegation of Seychelles stated that this issue was of great importance for the Government and that such participation was encouraged through many platforms, such as the National Youth Assembly and the National Youth Committee.

47. On the question of the Government's plans to improve the electoral process in advance of Assembly elections in 2016, the delegation noted the electoral reform process that had been undertaken from 2011 to 2013, which had already brought significant legislative amendments and improvements to electoral processes. The delegation also noted

that further changes to the electoral process must be initiated by the Electoral Commission, which the Government could subsequently consider.

48. Regarding the query on how the Government intended to improve the Office of the Ombudsman and the National Human Rights Commission to enable them to meet international standards, the delegation stated that the Government had initiated the review of the legal and administrative frameworks of both institutions, with a view to strengthening them and making them fully compliant with the Paris Principles. The delegation added that the Government recognized that both institutions required further human and financial resources in order to fulfil their mandates effectively, and would address that challenge as part of the review.

49. On the issue of when the Government of Seychelles intended to repeal section 151 of the Penal Code to decriminalize same-sex relationships, the delegation reported that the Government was conducting an overarching review of the Penal Code, under which section 151 would also be considered. No decision had been taken as to whether section 151 would be amended. The delegation noted that no one had ever been tried under section 151 (c) on the basis of his or her sexual orientation.

50. Regarding the question on the steps taken to prevent domestic violence, the delegation replied that sensitization programmes were used to educate the general population at all levels. The Government was also placing a lot of emphasis on capacity-building of law enforcement officers. The delegation added that victims of domestic violence could seek protection orders under the Family Violence Protection of Victims Act through the Family Tribunal. That Tribunal would be placed under the administration of the Supreme Court in the near future. The delegation stated that a new police child protection team had been established in 2015 to respond to child abuse, and that police stations had been decentralized to facilitate reporting of domestic violence cases. Furthermore, a domestic violence bill was expected to be adopted during the coming year.

51. On the question on plans to decriminalize defamation and what measures had been taken to ensure that restrictions on the freedoms of expression and opinion were compliant with international standards, the delegation recalled that those freedoms were fundamental rights protected in the Constitution. However, the delegation noted that a balancing act was needed when human rights conflicted with one another, for example the right to privacy and dignity with freedom of expression. According to the delegation, the provision of defamation was necessary to maintain the effective protection of persons and prevent the infringement of fundamental rights.

52. Regarding the implementation of social policies, the delegation reported that, in 2011, the country had launched a social renaissance campaign aimed at strengthening social policies. A national policy on family was awaiting governmental approval and a policy on the elderly was currently under development.

53. To reply to comments on freedom of expression for political parties, the delegation stated that all political parties, including the opposition ones, had equal access to media. The Elections Act allowed every registered candidate to broadcast matters related to elections. Noting that there had been complaints that one or two candidates had not had the right to express themselves, the delegation stated that there had been total freedom of expression and equal access to the media.

54. With regard to the efforts made by Seychelles to promote gender mainstreaming and to provide a specific definition of discrimination against women under the law, the delegation stated that the National Gender Management Team, composed of State and non-State actors, continued to provide support and direction for gender mainstreaming initiatives within the national institutions. It added that the Constitution guaranteed that every person had the right to equal protection under the law without any discrimination on

any grounds. Finally, the delegation noted that the *Gender and Law Manual* had been published in 2013 to guide the judiciary on interpreting the laws in a manner consistent with human rights obligations.

55. On the issue of the detention of persons for more than 24 hours without charge, the delegation stated that 24 hours gave time to the police to investigate the alleged offence of which a suspect was accused in accordance with the Penal Code and the Constitution.

56. Pakistan commended measures to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman, the legal and judicial system and the rights of women, such as the national action plan on gender-based violence, measures relating to the rights of persons with disabilities and the rights of migrant workers and measures against human trafficking.

57. The Democratic Republic of the Congo congratulated Seychelles for providing housing to its citizens, especially through programmes concerning social housing and aimed at allowing citizens to own their own housing. It noted that the Ombudsman also being president of the National Human Rights Commission did not guarantee the independence of those institutions.

58. Denmark welcomed the fact that Seychelles had accepted recommendations to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment during its first universal periodic review and hoped that steps were being taken towards that goal. It noted that the initial report of Seychelles to the Committee against Torture was long overdue. It highlighted that the Convention against Torture Initiative stood ready to assist Seychelles on those issues.

59. Djibouti commended the literacy rate among women but was concerned at the social obstacles young pregnant women were facing in continuing their schooling. Persons with disabilities did not have adequate access to health care, information, education and decent work. It referred to the finding of the Committee on the Rights of the Child that children with disabilities were not fully integrated in the school system.

60. Egypt commended progress on the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities, political participation, education and health. It acknowledged the Seychelles Human Rights Treaty Committee and implementation of a legal and policy framework on human trafficking. It was encouraged by the development of a national action plan on human rights.

61. Ethiopia commended the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act, the Food Act and the Local Government Act. The submission of treaty reports and the establishment of the Seychelles Human Rights Treaty Committee, amid its financial and expert constraints, demonstrated political commitment. Ethiopia called upon the international community to provide financial and technical assistance.

62. Fiji noted that Seychelles faced unique human rights challenges as a small island developing State. It would be important to make a linkage on how the consequences of climate change had an impact on the rights of the citizens of Seychelles. Fiji was concerned about overreliance on pretrial detention and the increase in the prison population.

63. Germany commended Seychelles for its engagement with international human rights mechanisms and its willingness to further improve the legislative framework for human rights.

64. Ghana recognized the 2014 Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act, and was concerned that corporal punishment, contrary to its prohibition in the Children's Act, was still prevalent in homes, penal institutions, day-care centres and schools.

65. Haiti noted the self-evaluation by Seychelles of the National Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman in order to bring them into compliance with the Paris Principles.

66. The Holy See acknowledged the development of a five-year national action plan on human rights and recognized the attention given to promoting education through the medium-term strategy on education for the period 2013-2017 and beyond.

67. India encouraged the Government to further review the effectiveness of the current framework of the National Human Rights Commission and welcomed the efforts to eliminate the judicial backlog. It also encouraged Seychelles to continue harmonizing domestic legislation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to take a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming.

68. Indonesia welcomed the efforts to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission in conformity with the Paris Principles and develop a national action plan on human rights. It recognized the measures taken by the Government to ensure the implementation of international human rights instruments ratified by Seychelles.

69. Iraq expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the Government to implement first-cycle recommendations. It noted the achievements of the Government in the area of human rights, such as the establishment of a national human rights commission and the adoption of a medium-term strategy for the education sector for the period 2013-2017.

70. Jamaica noted that, since its first review, Seychelles had made strides in reforming and enacting legislation in various areas, in cooperation with civil society and the international community. It commended the Government for its advocacy on behalf of the blue economy and climate change, and for strides made in renewable energy.

71. Libya commended Seychelles for the positive developments since the first cycle of its universal periodic review, including a national campaign to combat smoking and the adoption of the flexible employment programme aimed at increasing employment opportunities for vulnerable groups.

72. Maldives noted high levels of educational enrolment and achievement by girls. It encouraged Seychelles to continue reaching out to international partners, including OHCHR, for financial and technical assistance and commended Seychelles for raising the challenges of small island developing States in international forums, and for initiatives to combat the effects of climate change.

73. With regard to the concrete measures that the Government was taking to shorten the length of pretrial detention, the delegation of Seychelles indicated that the strategic plan of the judiciary for the period 2010-2014 recognized case backlogs as a key area in need of attention. Significant improvements had been made in that regard. The number of judges had been increased and the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal had moved into new premises, enabling the improved use of technology in court proceedings, which had allowed for easier disposal of cases and reduction of delays. The introduction of an electronic case flow management system had also improved the speed and efficacy of case flow management. The delegation stated that such measures had led to all criminal cases filed prior to 2008 having been concluded in the Court of Appeal, Magistrate Court and Supreme Court. Ninety-six per cent of ongoing cases had been filed between 2013 and 2015.

74. On the question on the ways in which Seychelles enforced existing laws to protect women and children from domestic violence and abuse, the delegation noted that domestic violence and gender-based violence cases could often go unreported, an unfortunate occurrence seen across the world. It added that legislative measures against domestic and gender-based violence must be implemented in a cohesive and harmonized manner in order

to effect change. In that regard, numerous awareness-raising activities and training sessions had been held for law enforcement officers, social workers and health workers, in order to build upon their capacities and skills with regard to responding to, identifying and prosecuting cases of domestic and gender-based violence, as well as providing effective protection to victims.

75. The delegation recalled that a new police child protection team had been established in February 2015 specifically to respond to cases of child abuse. The Director for Social Services was also empowered by the Children's Act to intervene in ongoing cases for the protection of children when the need arose.

76. With regard to the question on what concrete measures Seychelles was taking to enhance pluralism in the media, the delegation reported that Seychelles had made amendments which had significantly reduced the license fees for the operation of commercial radio, television and newspaper outlets. The delegation stated that the Government continued fostering an atmosphere that was conducive to imparting and receiving diverse points of view.

77. The delegation stated that the Government treated the issue of drugs and narcotics with the greatest seriousness. It had set up a detox unit and wellness centre which provided rehabilitation services for drug users. The delegation added that the authorities continued to liaise with international partners for further support, especially for capacity-building and training of staff. Furthermore, Seychelles had implemented strict laws on the use and trafficking of drugs and could impose a life sentence upon the perpetrators of drug trafficking.

78. The delegation noted that efforts to improve access to services, such as education and health, by persons with disabilities were ongoing. It mentioned that a national policy and an action plan on disability had been finalized. The inclusive policy on education and training had been adopted in 2014 and the National Council for the Disabled continued to take action towards disability mainstreaming.

79. Regarding the issue of outstanding reports under treaty bodies, the delegation stated that the resources of Seychelles were very tight and that it was difficult to keep up with the heavy reporting burden. However, as mentioned in the introductory statement, Seychelles had submitted various reports since its previous review.

80. The delegation noted that Seychelles would carefully study the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture with a view to possible signature and ratification.

81. The delegation stated that the policy of the Minister of Education allowed for teenage mothers to continue to go school while pregnant and to return to school after giving birth. Teenage mothers could receive support from different government agencies to continue their education if they chose to.

82. The delegation reported that the Education Act would be amended to prohibit corporal punishment in schools.

83. On the question of improving education, the delegation mentioned that the medium-term strategy on education for the period 2015-2017 covered 13 main components and related interventions or actions, and that Seychelles would receive technical and financial assistance from the World Bank regarding the implementation of that strategy.

84. With regard to the question of strengthening the gender secretariat, the delegation recalled that this secretariat had a monitoring and evaluation role. It developed policies and guidelines and sought to mainstream gender across sectors. The Government was committed to strengthening the gender secretariat, but it was also affected by human resource constraints that the country faced in many expert fields.

85. Mauritius commended multiple developments, including enhancing the credibility of the electoral process, and offered congratulations for the successful 2015 elections. It commended the development of a national action plan on human rights and acknowledged initiatives boosting economic prosperity. Mauritius encouraged Seychelles to pursue awareness-raising efforts on workers' rights issues.

86. Mexico welcomed the progress made by Seychelles in implementing the recommendations of the first universal periodic review cycle, in particular the adoption of a gender policy and plan of action to eliminate gender inequality. It also praised the national policy aimed at guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities.

87. Montenegro noted the concerns of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and asked Seychelles about steps taken to protect children. It wanted to learn more about the investigation of domestic violence cases, the adoption of a comprehensive law specifically criminalizing domestic violence, including marital rape, and activities strengthening victim assistance and rehabilitation.

88. Morocco commended the Seychelles Human Rights Treaty Committee and the Institute of Early Childhood Development. It encouraged Seychelles to request technical assistance to strengthen its National Human Rights Commission and bring it into compliance with the Paris Principles. Morocco underlined efforts to promote equality in the workplace.

89. Namibia applauded Seychelles for its legislative reforms such as the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act, the Animal and Biosecurity Act, the Food Act and the Disaster Management Act, and for strides made since 2011 towards eliminating case backlogs in the criminal justice system.

90. The Netherlands welcomed the inclusion of a wide range of women's rights in national legislation and the high level of female representation in national institutions, but remained concerned about the state of enforcement of legislation to eliminate gender-based violence.

91. The Niger noted with satisfaction the reinforcement of the legislative framework on media independence and radio broadcasting, the prohibition of trafficking in persons, protection of victims of trafficking and prevention measures. It welcomed the creation of the institute for the development of youth.

92. Nigeria commended efforts aimed at promoting the right of the child through, inter alia, the revamping of the National Commission for Child Protection, the establishment of a police child protection team and the enactment of the Local Government Act of 2015 aimed at involving people in local governance and decision-making processes.

93. Cuba noted the progress achieved in the protection of the rights of the child, the provision of primary health services to the entire population and protection of the rights of people with disabilities. It also commended the establishment of the Commission on Human Rights Treaties.

94. Panama recalled that, as a result of the first universal periodic review of Seychelles, the Government had established a national human rights institution and passed laws aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights.

95. The Philippines welcomed the establishment of the Seychelles Human Rights Treaty Committee. It was concerned about the apparent lack of strategy with regard to promoting education and the continued lack of appropriate treatment accorded to persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees, as well as inadequate freedom of expression.

96. Portugal welcomed the standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders. It commended Seychelles for considering establishing an interministerial committee

responsible for the implementation of its international human rights obligations. Portugal was concerned about the incidence of sexual exploitation of children, including child sex tourism.

97. Senegal welcomed the creation of the National Human Rights Commission, the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman and the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. It called on the international community to provide Seychelles with the necessary assistance.

98. Singapore commended the efforts of Seychelles to provide full access to safe water and sanitation for all persons in the country and welcomed its commitment to the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders in prison in order to help them to gain vocational skills and employment by the national programmes created.

99. Slovenia was concerned about the child legislation that had not yet been fully aligned with the Convention and about the lack of a comprehensive and systematic approach to gender mainstreaming. It regretted reports of a persistence of stereotypes regarding the roles of women and men in family and society.

100. South Africa commended Seychelles for its political will and efforts in promoting and protecting human rights in its country, including the adoption of several legislative and institutional measures, as well as the noticeable representation of women in decision-making bodies and the roll-out of the housing programme and education strategy.

101. Spain commended Seychelles for the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, as it had been recommended by Spain during the previous review, and also recognized the progress in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and the existence of a national council on that matter.

102. Togo commended Seychelles for its determination in combating trafficking in persons, as well as for the creation of the National Commission for the Protection of the Child. It welcomed the efforts undertaken to reform the judicial system to make it more efficient.

103. Trinidad and Tobago commended Seychelles for the introduction of several pieces of legislation and the review of policies relating to, inter alia, early childhood development, tertiary education, employment and health. It added that programmes for rehabilitation, reconciliation and reintegration into the society of Seychelles were exemplary.

104. Noting that Seychelles had already signed several international agreements on corruption, Turkey encouraged the Government of Seychelles to start the process of enacting the law establishing an independent anti-corruption commission. It commended Seychelles for having issued a standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders.

105. Ukraine was pleased to observe that, in 2015, the presidential elections had been held in a calm and peaceful atmosphere and that the fundamental rights of the electorate had been respected. It acknowledged positive developments in the legislative process, in particular the adoption of legal acts in the areas of education, media and security.

106. Aware of the impact of climate change on small island developing nations, Italy welcomed the Government's leadership and efforts on that issue and the decision to progressively increase the use of renewable sources of energy. It praised the attention devoted to women's and children's rights.

107. France commended the enactment of the 2014 Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act and the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

108. The delegation of Seychelles responded to the advance question on the achievements of the National Commission for Child Protection with regard to the improvement of the system of protection of children and adolescents, and the reform of the Education Act with specific reference to corporal punishment. The National Commission for Child Protection was set up under the Children Act in 2005 as an advisory body bringing together all stakeholders to propose policies and advise the Government on all matters pertaining to child protection. The delegation noted that, since its inception, the Commission had coordinated actions to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law and had validated the reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Education Act was in the process of being reformed, and was going through the necessary governmental approval processes.

109. On the question of what laws, campaigns or policies had been enacted since the previous cycle to eliminate gender inequality in access to opportunities and remuneration for men and women, and whether a gender perspective had been incorporated into other national development plans, the delegation noted that the national employment policy of 2014 had been aimed at promoting gender equality and putting in place mechanisms to ensure equal and fair treatment for both men and women. Mainstreaming gender into national development plans was an ongoing activity and was supported by the National Gender Management Team. The delegation mentioned that the national gender policy was expected to be launched during the first quarter of the year.

110. Regarding the advance question on efforts made to improve the capacities of the police and national security forces vis-à-vis human rights, the delegation responded that modules on human rights as well as humanitarian law had been incorporated into the Police Academy. Specific training on issues such as gender-based violence and trafficking in persons had also been held for front-line law enforcement officials. The delegation added that, in the light of the fight of Seychelles against piracy and the capture and prosecution of Somali pirates, Seychelles defence forces had received capacity-building and training, which had improved upon the skills of national security forces to treat captured pirates in a manner that was fully respectful of human rights.

111. The delegation responded to the advance question on the implementation of its previous recommendation issued in 2011 regarding access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and the current status of those services. As of 2010, 93 per cent of households in Seychelles had treated water, and 97 percent of the population had sanitation facilities. The delegation added that the Public Utilities Corporation in Seychelles continued to strive towards ensuring full access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all persons. With regard to sanitation, refurbishment of existing sewer networks was ongoing, and there were plans to expand the existing networks.

112. The delegation stated that the Government was considering the provisions of the Kampala Amendments and their implications for implementation in order to determine the position of Seychelles on ratification.

113. The delegation mentioned that Seychelles was currently developing specific legislation to address domestic violence and that the Penal Code already criminalized any sexual assault or rape.

114. On the protection of children's rights, the delegation recalled what it had said earlier: that a new police child protection team had been established to respond to cases of child abuse and that the Director for Social Services could intervene in ongoing cases for the protection of children.

115. The delegation noted that a national health policy had been approved in 2015 and that a national health strategic plan had been developed. It also thanked Cuba for providing technical assistance to the national health sector.

116. The delegation underlined that Seychelles already had an inter-ministerial committee on human rights, which played a role in drafting reports under treaty bodies.

117. The delegation noted that Seychelles had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and was in the process of carrying out consultations for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

118. On the issue of human rights education, the delegation mentioned that secondary school students were taught their rights and freedoms, which included those contained in chapter III of the Constitution—the Seychellois Charter of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms. Citizenship education had also been incorporated into the primary school curriculum, which touched upon human rights issues. The delegation added that the national action plan on human rights that the Government was working on was expected to develop a road map for human rights education.

119. To conclude, the delegation stated that the Government of Seychelles would study the recommendations received during the review with great interest and looked forward to communicating its views to the universal periodic review secretariat and the troika in due course. It reiterated the country's plea regarding human rights and climate change. Noting that not enough had been done to prevent and to mitigate the erosion of the planet, the delegation called upon the States and organizations present at the session to push that agenda further at all forums for the right of Seychellois to exist now and in the future.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations**

120. **The following recommendations will be examined by Seychelles, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the thirty-second session of the Human Rights Council, in June 2016:**

120.1 **Ratify all the international instruments on human rights (Iraq);**

120.2 **Accede, as soon as possible, to the human rights international instruments to which it is not yet a party (Uruguay);**

120.3 **Speed up Seychelles' domestic processes with a view to ratifying international human rights treaties (Philippines);**

120.4 **Continue efforts with regard to the ratification and implementation of the core human rights treaties and develop further the institutional framework for the implementation of human rights standards contained therein (Slovenia);**

120.5 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Portugal);**

120.6 **Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Benin);**

120.7 **Ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol (Senegal);**

120.8 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Chile) (Montenegro) (Morocco) (Panama) (Portugal) (Turkey);**

** The conclusions and recommendations have not been edited.

120.9 **Sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Cabo Verde) (Spain);**

120.10 **Intensify its efforts to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Denmark);**

120.11 **Accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (France);**

120.12 **Ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Benin);**

120.13 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (Burundi) (Chile) (Portugal);**

120.14 **Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, signed in 2007 (Senegal);**

120.15 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Chile);**

120.16 **Consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Ghana);**

120.17 **Consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Ghana) (Niger);**

120.18 **Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Argentina) (Chile) (Montenegro);**

120.19 **Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance as soon as possible (Germany);**

120.20 **Sign and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Cabo Verde);**

120.21 **Speed up the ratification procedure of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Togo);**

120.22 **Accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (France);**

120.23 **Ratify the Arms Trade Treaty (Burundi);**

120.24 **Ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (Chile);**

120.25 **Harmonize national legislation, including in particular human rights legislation, with international human rights standards (Philippines);**

120.26 **Enact legislation to combat domestic violence (Maldives);**

120.27 **Fully criminalize domestic violence against women and children, including marital rape, and ensure that such acts are tried by criminal courts as opposed to a family tribunal (Zambia);**

120.28 **Pass the Domestic Violence Act and ensure adequate resources and training for officials dealing with gender-based violence (Australia);**

120.29 **Ensure the participation of civil society in the drafting of a new law on domestic violence (Italy);**

120.30 **Adopt specific legislation and measures under the Human Rights National Plan to help prevent, prosecute and punish domestic violence against women and also to end discrimination against women within the society (Spain);**

120.31 **Continue taking measures to combat gender-based violence and to take further measures to ensure the effective implementation of laws offering protection against this violence (Namibia);**

120.32 **Take measures to ensure that existing laws criminalizing rape and domestic violence are fully enforced, and cases are fully investigated and prosecuted consistent with these laws (United States of America);**

120.33 **Adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat violence against women and a comprehensive law on violence against women that specifically criminalize domestic violence (Turkey);**

120.34 **Implement measures to improve enforcement of laws criminalizing rape and domestic violence, including by thoroughly investigating and prosecuting all acts of violence against women, and by providing training to law enforcement officials (Canada);**

120.35 **Amend the Criminal Code to raise the age of criminal responsibility in accordance with international standards (Chile);**

120.36 **Reform the juvenile justice system, raise the age of criminal responsibility, and safeguard the integrity of minors who are held in detention centres (Mexico);**

120.37 **Review the Penal Code so that the age of criminal responsibility is in accordance with relevant international standards (France);**

120.38 **Raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility according to the general comment No. 10 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Uruguay);**

120.39 **Continue to enact specific legislation to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Pakistan);**

120.40 **Amend laws that could contradict the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Panama);**

120.41 **Introduce a legal ban on various forms of violence against children in all settings (Ukraine);**

120.42 **Expressly prohibit the corporal punishment of children in all settings, including the home, penal institutions, schools and day-care centres and also take steps to explicitly repeal the right "to administer proper punishment" in the Children's Act (Ghana);**

120.43 **Ensure the explicit inclusion in the national legislation of the prohibition of all forms of corporal punishment of minors, whether in the home, childcare facilities, schools and education centres in general (Uruguay);**

120.44 **Criminalize the act of exploiting both boys and girls and the incidence of child tourism, as well as prosecute the perpetrators in the travel and tourism industry by imposing stiffer punishments on them (Zambia);**

120.45 **Adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (Netherlands);**

120.46 **Reinforce the relevant legal framework in order to contrast discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (Italy);**

120.47 **Implement its commitment to repeal Section 151 of the Penal Code to decriminalize same-sex relationships (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

120.48 **Repeal laws criminalizing consensual, same-sex relationships between adults (Australia);**

120.49 **Repeal the provisions criminalizing same-sex sexual relations between consenting adults, to respect the principles of equality and non-discrimination among all persons (France);**

120.50 **Decriminalize consensual sex relations between adults of the same sex and strengthen legislation punishing all forms of discrimination, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (Chile);**

120.51 **Expressly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and decriminalize same-sex sexual conduct between consenting adults (Canada);**

120.52 **Guarantee that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons fully enjoy their human rights, on equal terms, by repealing norms that criminalize and stigmatize them (Argentina);**

120.53 **Repeal national provisions that discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, and decriminalize consensual sexual relations between adults of the same gender (Germany);**

120.54 **Strengthen legislative, policy and institutional measures to prevent, combat and punish human trafficking; and ensure that victims are identified, aware of their rights, and referred to appropriate services (Canada);**

120.55 **Amend the Public Order Act to allow for freedom of assembly and remove restrictions on freedom of the press by relaxing libel laws that could impede journalists (Australia);**

120.56 **Amend the Civil Code regarding defamation to be in line with international standards on the right to freedoms of expression and opinion (Botswana);**

120.57 **Review its legislation in order to protect and promote the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including on the Internet, also providing protection to journalists against harassment by police and other authorities (Brazil);**

120.58 **Issue a law on freedom of the press (Iraq);**

120.59 **Allocate more resources to its human rights bodies in order to ensure their effective functioning in line with international standards (Turkey);**

120.60 **Ensure that the National Human Rights Commission is in line with the Paris Principles and that the Ombudsman is fully independent (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

120.61 **Provide the National Human Rights Commission with all the necessary resources to make it fully compliant with the Paris Principles (A Status) (Portugal);**

120.62 **Accelerate the ongoing exercise to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission and to make it fully compliant with the Paris Principles (Zimbabwe);**

120.63 **Devote sufficient resources to the National Human Rights Commission (Algeria);**

120.64 **Complete the process of bringing the national human rights institution into compliance with the Paris Principles and allocating it the adequate resources (Cabo Verde);**

120.65 **Continue the necessary legal and institutional steps to reform the National Human Rights Commission so that it meets the Paris Principles (Germany);**

120.66 **Continue its efforts aimed at strengthening the work of the National Human Rights Commission and establish a central mechanism for human rights education (Libya);**

120.67 **Provide all necessary resources, including financial and human resources, to the National Human Rights Commission to enhance its activities (Mauritius);**

120.68 **Ensure the independence and effectiveness of the National Commission on Human Rights, in particular through the allocation of adequate resources in order to bring it into conformity with the Paris Principles (France);**

120.69 **Expedite the review of the effectiveness of the current framework of the office of the National Human Rights Commission and Ombudsman (Ethiopia);**

120.70 **Proceed to the separation of the Ombudsman's Office and the National Human Rights Commission (Democratic Republic of the Congo);**

120.71 **Maintain and strengthen the institutional independence of the Ombudsman and the National Human Rights Commission (Mexico);**

120.72 **Speed up the process to formulate a five-year National Action Plan on Human Rights and implement it at an earlier time (China);**

120.73 **Finalize the ongoing five-year National Action Plan on Human Rights and put in place the necessary mechanisms for its implementation (Ethiopia);**

120.74 **Do whatever is necessary to continue to promote and protect the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all its citizens (Nigeria);**

120.75 **Further strengthen measures to provide protection and support to the family as the natural and fundamental unit of the society (Egypt);**

120.76 **Ensure that human rights education and training addresses also the rights of the child and women's rights in a comprehensive and systematic way (Slovenia);**

120.77 **Finalize the draft national gender policy and its action plan (Turkey);**

120.78 **Finalize the National Gender Policy and its Plan of Action, so as to further promote women's rights and create an enabling environment for women (Italy);**

120.79 **Develop a comprehensive national strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against and ill-treatment of children (Turkey);**

120.80 **Consider establishing a coordination mechanism between stakeholders in charge of children's rights to optimize child protection (United Arab Emirates);**

120.81 **Encourage the participation of children in all the programmes and initiatives concerning them, whenever feasible (United Arab Emirates);**

120.82 **Take effective measures to fully implement its national framework plan against drugs for the period 2014 to 2018, in order to reduce the demand for drugs among the most vulnerable category of the population, namely children and young people (Democratic Republic of the Congo);**

120.83 **Ensure implementation of the country's National Drug and Control Master Plan in order to address the high prevalence of drug consumption (South Africa);**

120.84 **Step up national efforts in combating all forms of human trafficking (Egypt);**

120.85 **Ensure the successful implementation of their National Action Plan and Strategic Framework on Trafficking in Persons (Nigeria);**

120.86 **Ensure efficient implementation of the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act to combat trafficking in human beings, by collecting data, improving the training of police officers and other law enforcement officials, strengthening mechanisms for investigating the criminal cases of trafficking and prosecuting and punishing traffickers (Slovenia);**

120.87 **Continue and enhance its efforts towards the full implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and the Members of their Families (Indonesia);**

120.88 **Continue efforts aiming at enhancing human rights education, including training and capacity-building for the public sector (Egypt);**

120.89 **Further involve civil society as a partner of the Government in promoting and protecting human rights (Indonesia);**

120.90 **Continue its collaboration with the United Nations to improve the submission of human rights reports (Jamaica);**

120.91 **Expedite the submission of reports to treaty bodies (Chad);**

120.92 **Take the necessary measures to submit overdue reports to treaty bodies (Togo);**

120.93 **Hand in its initial report to the Committee against Torture as soon as possible (Denmark);**

120.94 **Engage actively to implement treaty body recommendations (Slovenia);**

120.95 **Undertake necessary steps aimed at adopting a comprehensive strategy that addresses all forms of discrimination (Ukraine);**

120.96 **Prohibit discrimination on gender, disability, ethnicity and socioeconomic grounds, and adopt a comprehensive strategy to eliminate all forms of discrimination (Panama);**

120.97 **Continue taking measures to increase the participation of women in all social and economic spheres of Seychelles and continue implementing regulations to end all forms of discrimination against them (Pakistan);**

120.98 **Take measures to protect the rights of non-citizens and migrant workers, and eliminate discrimination against them in all areas (Mexico);**

120.99 **Adopt better measures on discrimination against migrants and non-citizens (Nigeria);**

120.100 **Ensure the protection of children of migrant workers from statelessness (Ukraine);**

120.101 **Take appropriate measures to facilitate family reunification of migrant workers and members of their families (Ukraine);**

120.102 **Continue to fight against all forms of discrimination affecting religious minorities (Angola);**

120.103 **The need for police officers to undergo compulsory training in the field of human rights (Zambia);**

120.104 **Provide adequate resources and training, including to law enforcement officials, to ensure effective institutions that comply with human rights norms and standards (Australia);**

120.105 **Review its prison conditions in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and implement the results of such review before the third cycle of its universal periodic review (Fiji);**

120.106 **Continue efforts to reduce pretrial detention by expanding, at the national level, the rehabilitation programme Coetivy (Haiti);**

120.107 **Improve the "Phoenix Programme" in order to facilitate the social integration of women upon their release from prison (Haiti);**

120.108 **Step up efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders, including through the introduction of formal education programmes in prisons (Singapore);**

120.109 **Take concrete measures to fight domestic violence, to prosecute perpetrators and to protect the victims of such practices, as well as to enhance the effectiveness and the financing of the police's specialized unit, the "Family Squad" (Brazil);**

120.110 **Increase its efforts to safeguard women and children from domestic violence and to protect persons with disabilities (Holy See);**

120.111 **Continue efforts in the fight against impunity for domestic violence and develop accommodation facilities and support mechanisms for victims of such violence (France);**

120.112 **Continue pursuing child protection measures (Djibouti);**

120.113 **Take all necessary measures to protect children from all forms of exploitation (Portugal);**

120.114 **Spare no effort in fighting violence against children and the drug trafficking of which they are victims (Angola);**

120.115 **Intensify the Government's efforts with a view to the most effective protection possible against the risk of child sexual abuse (Cabo Verde);**

120.116 **Fully investigate alleged elections irregularities and ensure proper due process is followed in all court challenges (United States of America);**

120.117 **Ensure prompt access to justice for women victims of all forms of violence, as well as prosecute all acts of violence and punish the perpetrators (Mexico);**

120.118 **Adopt measures to combat corruption, especially in the judiciary, and ensure independence of the judiciary (Botswana);**

120.119 **Increase efforts to fight against money-laundering (Haiti);**

120.120 **Continue efforts to fully ensure respect for fundamental freedoms, especially the freedom of assembly and the freedom of association, as well as the freedom of the press (France);**

120.121 **Enforce Seychelles' international human rights obligations and constitutional guarantees regarding the rights to freedom of religion, association and expression (United States of America);**

120.122 **Establish clear processes and procedures for the selection of independent and impartial members of the National Media Commission (Germany);**

120.123 **Increase the financial resources and the staff of the National Media Commission so that it can carry out its mandate, promoting and protecting in this way the freedom of the press (Spain);**

120.124 **Continue to strengthen its social policies in order to provide the greatest possible well-being to its people, especially to the most vulnerable sectors (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of));**

120.125 **Continue to implement policies for development of its people under the Sustainable Development Goals (Pakistan);**

120.126 **Initiate a national dialogue on a universal basic income (Haiti);**

120.127 **Organize awareness campaigns for foreign migrant workers about their social and economic rights and ensure that migrant workers enjoy treatment that is not less favourable than that which applies for nationals, including through labour inspections in sectors where migrant workers are employed (Slovenia);**

120.128 **Strengthen gender equality, particularly for wage remuneration (Algeria)**

120.129 **Implement the "National Health Policy" as a way of promoting the right to health (Cuba);**

120.130 **Continue to strengthen policies and programmes to ensure that all in Seychelles have access to safe water and sanitation (Singapore);**

120.131 **Strengthen efforts aimed at improving the national response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic (South Africa);**

120.132 **Establish protective measures that would allow young students to re-enter the mainstream education system after childbirth (Djibouti);**

120.133 **Put in place protection measures that would allow girls to return to school after giving birth and raise awareness with a view to eliminating the existing prejudices that impede and discourage teenage mothers from returning to school (Netherlands);**

120.134 Prioritize the implementation of a formal education programme for incarcerated men, women and youth, with appropriate support from the private sector and civil society (Jamaica);

120.135 Continue its efforts in order to place a premium on education, particularly by assuring that there be a sufficient number of properly trained local teachers (Holy See);

120.136 Increase the inputs in education and give special attention to vocational training, improving quality of its labour force, and guarantee the right to work (China);

120.137 Renew its focus on technical and vocational training through its proposed Skill Development Programme for the youth (India);

120.138 Take measures to integrate technical vocational education and training into formal education (Maldives);

120.139 Continue pursuing initiatives aimed at improving the educational system with a view to further developing technical and vocational education and training (Trinidad and Tobago);

120.140 Integrate human rights education and training in the various levels of schooling (Morocco);

120.141 Maintain as a Government priority awareness and education on human rights (Cuba);

120.142 Enhance measures to ensure education for all (Namibia);

120.143 Continue to implement laws and regulations for protection and promotion of rights of people with disabilities (Pakistan);

120.144 Strengthen efforts to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including through the provision of adequate infrastructure (South Africa);

120.145 Adopt tangible actions to assist persons with disabilities, particularly in terms of access to the labour market and the fight against poverty and social exclusion (Spain);

120.146 Improve the accessibility for persons with disabilities, particularly children, of education and key services (Trinidad and Tobago);

120.147 Facilitate the access and integration of children with disabilities in public schools (Djibouti);

120.148 Provide children with disabilities greater access to facilities, as well as to public transportation and public buildings, as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and in keeping with the Government's existing thrust (Jamaica);

120.149 Explicitly task the department of Climate Change and Energy to examine the human rights implications of climate change, particularly as it relates to the State's ability to realize socioeconomic rights (Fiji);

120.150 Continue to raise awareness among the population on the impact of climate change (Haiti).

121. All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.

Annex

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Seychelles was headed by H.E. Ambassador Barry Faure (Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs Department) and composed of the following members:

- H.E. Ambassador Selby Pillay, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Seychelles to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva
- Ms. Michelle Sharon Marguerite, Senior Legal Officer, Ministry of Social Affairs, Community Development and Sports
- Ms. Gayethri Murugaiyan, Second Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Transport
- Ms. Audrina Dine, Attaché/Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Permanent Mission of the Republic of Seychelles to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva
- Ms. Guyllianne Irene Sirame, Assistant Legal Draftsperson, Attorney General's Chambers

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Agenda item 6
Universal periodic review

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Solomon Islands

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its twenty-fourth session from 18 to 29 January 2016. The review of Solomon Islands was held at the 12th meeting on 25 January 2016. The delegation of Solomon Islands was headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Milner TOZAKA. At its 17th meeting held on 28 January 2016, the Working Group adopted the report on Solomon Islands.

2. On 12 January 2016, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Solomon Islands: Mongolia, Russian Federation and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Solomon Islands:

(a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/24/SLB/1);

(b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/24/SLB/2);

(c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/24/SLB/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Liechtenstein, Mexico, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was transmitted to Solomon Islands through the troika. These questions are available on the extranet of the universal periodic review.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. Given the distance between Geneva and the South Pacific Islands, the delegation of Solomon Islands emphasized that its presence showed the State's commitment to the universal periodic review.

6. The delegation explained that the National Development Strategy of Solomon Islands was the national framework for government priorities. It indicated that the implementation of the recommendations of the universal periodic review was aligned to the key priority areas of the Strategy, such as building better lives for all by taking care of all the people, improving livelihoods, creating and maintaining an enabling environment and strengthening links for effective implementation. The Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals have also been addressed under the Strategy.

7. The delegation reported that the integration of two important features of the National Development Strategy, namely the Development Partnership Framework and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, was currently under review. Those features were reportedly vital to monitoring progress on the recommendations of the universal periodic review and ensuring the support of development partners in that process.

8. Solomon Islands has a population of almost 600,000, with 80 per cent located in rural areas. The delegation highlighted that it faced challenges as a small island developing State, particularly in reaching the rural populace with service delivery, the frequency of natural disasters, as well as transportation and communication difficulties. Other challenges in implementing the first-cycle recommendations included the short timespan of successive Solomon Islands Governments with shifting priorities and budgetary issues and a high staff turnover. As a result, consistency and continuity in the implementation of human rights and other development issues were affected. Resource, capacity and financial constraints for stakeholders' consultations with the rural populace remained a key challenge to addressing human rights issues.

9. The delegation pointed to other equally important challenges, such as the lack of understanding and sensitivity to human rights issues, which resulted in delays in making progress in the implementation of the recommendations.

10. The delegation proceeded to highlight significant achievements made since the last universal periodic review. Recognition was given to the achievements and contribution of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands in restoring law and order and the delivery of basic economic and social services. The delegation reminded participants that Solomon Islands had experienced civil unrest between 1998 and 2003, which affected the rule of law, service delivery, development and economic activities, to name a few areas affecting basic human rights. Normalcy of livelihoods, business ventures and investment returned to the country following the deployment of the Regional Assistance Mission in 2003.

11. The delegation explained that the current Government had taken office about 18 months ago and had taken on extensive law reform. It had already achieved the enactment of the Family Protection Act 2014, the Political Parties Integrity Act, the Police Act and the Correctional Service Act. In addition, the Government planned to present eight bills to Parliament at its first sessional sitting of 2016, including, in particular, the Child and Family Welfare Bill; the Whistle-Blower Bill and an Anti-Corruption Bill that might lead to the establishment of an independent commission against corruption.

12. The delegation provided information on action taken to strengthen the capacity of courts and on access to justice in rural areas, including providing housing for lawyers in four of the provinces furthest from the capital, new and refurbished courthouses and magistrates helping out in regular court sittings. A new juvenile and family court in Honiara was reportedly user friendly for young persons and family members during court hearings. The delegation referred to the appointment in 2014 of a permanent chairperson to the Law Reform Commission that assured Government to progress law review references on to the next process of the drafting of legislation. The Government acknowledged support received from Australia and the Commonwealth Secretariat for legal drafting that had contributed to the development of many legislative bills in the past.

13. The delegation reported that the latest draft federal Constitution of 2014 might soon be submitted to Parliament and that it covered a broader range of human rights and proposed that a human rights commission be established.

14. On the issue of a national human rights institution, the delegation reported that the Government was currently exploring an expansion of the mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman so that human rights complaints or issues might be brought before it. Discussions were continuing on the human resources capacity of the existing institution to deal with human rights complaints, while also looking at the provision for a human rights commission under the proposed federal Constitution.

15. The delegation referred to other mechanisms already in place to assist successive Governments with reporting under human rights treaties, such as the Solomon Islands

National Advisory Committee on CEDAW, the National Advisory and Action Committee on Children as well as the National UPR Working Committee which has oversight for the universal periodic review cycles.

16. Regarding the independence of the judiciary, the delegation stated that Solomon Islands strived to maintain a vibrant justice system by upholding the rule of law and promoting and providing access to justice to those who sought it. The delegation referred to training and in-service support to the judiciary and the magistracy offered through the Law and Justice Sector programmes. Solomon Islands stated that it continued to maintain court tours to the provinces to consider higher court cases for the convenience of the rural populace. The Government acknowledged the assistance provided to the judiciary and magistracy by the Commonwealth and bilateral partners and welcomed further assistance in that regard.

17. The delegation referred to the strategic plan on rural water supply, sanitation and hygiene (R-WASH) 2015-2020, with its vision for all, in both rural and urban areas, to have easy access to sufficient quality and safe water and appropriate sanitation in a safe and hygienic environment by 2024. At present, only 35 to 40 per cent of the needed R-WASH infrastructure is available in rural areas and the plan is to roll out further to reach 100 per cent R-WASH access by 2024. Solomon Islands expressed gratitude to both Japan and the European Union for their continuous assistance in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene.

18. The delegation stated that fast population growth and urban drift had placed pressure on resources such as land and housing for the working populace in urban Honiara. Temporary Occupancy Licences had been reviewed to cater for the expanding urban population.

19. Regarding the health sector, the delegation indicated that the Government was in the process of completing its second Health Demographic Survey, which would form the basis for improving the delivery of health services. The delegation stated that Solomon Islands was committed to improving inclusive access to health for all. Infant mortality had reportedly been reduced due to increased access to health facilities and with skilled attendance at 95 per cent of births. There were 187 nurses' aide posts, 102 rural health clinics, 38 area health-care centres and 7 provincial hospitals. There was increased immunization, although challenges remained to reduce child mortality. There was reportedly improvement in access to sexual and reproductive health services, including pre- and post-natal care, with more than 80 per cent of deliveries in health facilities with the services of skilled personnel. The delegation stated that, malaria, the leading cause of death, had been dramatically reduced as a result of scaled-up prevention and control interventions.

20. On education, the delegation referred to the Government's aims to achieve universal education for all and stated that an Education Bill had been developed. The Government had also developed an Inclusive Education Policy to address equal opportunities for children with disabilities to access education, provide opportunities for pregnant students to return to the classroom after giving birth, abolish corporal punishment and promote the fee-free policy for schools. There were currently four schools for children with special needs, with both primary and secondary levels, that received grant assistance from the Government and faith-based organizations.

21. The delegation stated that the Government, with the support of OHCHR, was working on a concept framework to enable the Government to monitor, report and follow up on international treaty obligations, which would help to fast-track its commitments to meet its reporting obligations. A common core document was in draft form and needed updating before it could be submitted to the treaty bodies sometime in 2016.

22. With regards to cooperation with special procedures, the Government had issued a standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders. To date, two special procedure mandate holders have visited Solomon Islands, the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. The delegation stated that the Government wished to extend an invitation to visit Solomon Islands to the special procedure dealing with water and sanitation.

23. The delegation stated that Solomon Islands did not have stand-alone non-discrimination legislation. Rather, successive governments had taken piecemeal steps to advocate for specific areas of rights, such as for women, children and persons with disabilities. According to the delegation, the Bill of Rights provisions under the new proposed federal Constitution was comparably more progressive in accordance with human rights standards.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

24. During the interactive dialogue, 47 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of the present report.

25. Portugal welcomed the ongoing efforts to ratify a number of international human rights treaties. However, it noted that Solomon Islands had signed, but had still not ratified, the Rome Statute, despite accepting to do so during the first cycle of the review. Portugal noted that Solomon Islands was particularly vulnerable to climate change and encouraged all efforts aimed at mitigating that threat.

26. The Republic of Korea appreciated the progress achieved by Solomon Islands, despite the difficult challenges faced, particularly the ratification of a number of fundamental International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, the extension of a standing invitation to all the Human Rights Council special procedure mandate holders as well as the adoption of the Family Protection Act of 2014, which criminalizes domestic violence in all of its forms and seeks to protect victims.

27. Sierra Leone commended the adoption of the Family Protection Act, the establishment of a National UPR Working Committee and the implementation of policies criminalizing trafficking in persons. Noting that many challenges faced by a small island development State impeded its capacity to implement the needed change, Sierra Leone encouraged Solomon Islands to continue working with regional and international partners to bring laws and customs into line with international norms. It encouraged the development of strategies and polices to promote gender equality, to address discrimination against women and to expedite the enactment of the Child and Family Welfare Bill.

28. Slovenia appreciated the enactment of the Family Protection Act, the criminalization of domestic violence and the adoption of the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls as well as the Child and Family Welfare Bill. It considered that its previous recommendation 80.8 (see A/HRC/18/8) had been implemented and that its recommendation 80.14 (ibid.) had been mostly implemented. Slovenia remained concerned at the prevalence and social acceptance of sexual violence and the discriminatory customary practices such as the "bride price". It hoped that the planned National Policy on Disability Inclusive Development would be put into action.

29. Spain acknowledged the work undertaken by Solomon Islands to establish a national policy aimed at fulfilling the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. It congratulated Solomon Islands for incorporating provisions in its Family Protection Act on

combating gender violence. Spain also welcomed the efforts made to implement the "Education for All" initiative.

30. Switzerland welcomed progress in combating violence against women, especially the adoption of the Family Protection Act. It stressed the importance of dealing with the past, rehabilitating the victims, combating impunity and re-establishing the rule of law to achieve reconciliation and durable peace. Switzerland expressed concern at human rights violations committed by some corporations active in the forest industry. It encouraged Solomon Islands to continue to ratify international instruments to protect and respect human rights.

31. Trinidad and Tobago noted the steps taken to increase awareness and implement training in relation to incidences of domestic violence as well as the criminalization of domestic violence through the Family Protection Act. It also noted the measures taken to improve the participation of women in political and public life. It welcomed the creation of gender focal points within ministries and focal points on disability at the provincial level to assist with the mainstreaming of those issues. Trinidad and Tobago applauded the fact that, despite external shocks, in particular natural disasters, Solomon Islands continued to engage with special procedures and complete the ratification of key ILO conventions and the development of policy and legislation to address such matters as immigration, education, justice and climate change.

32. The delegation reported that, following the adoption of the Family Protection Act, the next stage was to ensure its operationalization and implementation through the work of the Ministry for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs. The delegation highlighted that Solomon Islands was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and that one of the 50 Members of Parliament was a woman and that the Government was working with the aforementioned ministries to achieve the goals of the Convention and the objective of gender equality.

33. The delegation called attention to the information contained in the national report on the Government's position on climate change.

34. The delegation stated that the Government was still assessing information received from different ministries on priority to be given to the ratification of various international instruments. The delegation emphasized that the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had been completed. Members of Parliament had received a copy of the report. The delegation stated that the report and its recommendations were being considered by an appointed consultant within the Office of the Prime Minister and planned proposals for follow-up action would be presented to the Government.

35. Responding to comments made by Slovenia, the delegation clarified that, while the Police Act prohibited the use of corporal punishment by the police, the draft federal Constitution permitted reasonable chastisement so long as it did not amount to torture or inhuman treatment. The delegation stated that it was important to raise awareness in communities and in the home that the use of corporal punishment was a violation of human rights.

36. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland commended the consultative and inclusive process to take forward accepted recommendations. It welcomed the recent Police, Immigration and Family Protection Acts and the criminalization of smuggling and human trafficking. It urged Solomon Islands to take action to address the continuing and disturbingly high instances of violence against women. It was concerned that there had been no evident progress towards the decriminalization of same sex relationships.

37. The United States of America commended the Solomon Islands for its commitment to democracy and free and fair national elections in 2014. It applauded the recent initiatives to reduce domestic violence and support survivors, including through the creation of the SAFENET network, and the enactment of the Family Protection Act. However, it was concerned at the persistence of government corruption and lengthy pretrial detentions, the high levels of gender-based violence, particularly sexual abuse, and that local children and foreign women were often subjected to trafficking, including forced prostitution and domestic servitude. It regretted that women continued to face discrimination across all sectors of society and that there was only one woman Member of Parliament.

38. Uruguay welcomed the adoption of the 2014 Family Protection Act which criminalizes domestic violence and protects its victims. It noted that such measures needed to be accompanied by education and awareness-raising campaigns. Uruguay encouraged Solomon Islands to ensure that all the population benefitted from this Act, particularly in ensuring access to justice. Uruguay encouraged Solomon Islands to interact with the different stakeholders at the national and international levels to move forward with accession to international human rights instruments and the presentation of reports, some of which were overdue. Uruguay was concerned at the lack of legislation to protect persons with disabilities from any form of discrimination, despite the recommendations accepted during the first cycle, and encouraged the adoption of holistic legislation and the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

39. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela noted the progress made to guarantee access to basic services, in particular in the areas of health and education. It welcomed the preparation of the National Development Strategy aimed at mitigating poverty, as well as, inter alia, the gender policies, education action plan and measures to combat violence and discrimination against women.

40. Algeria congratulated Solomon Islands for the progress made since its first review. It noted in particular progress in the areas of immigration and combating human trafficking, transparency in the management of public funding, gender equality and protection of the family and children. It welcomed the adoption of national policies, in the areas of development and the rights of persons with disabilities.

41. Argentina valued the efforts of Solomon Islands to implement recommendations from the first review, in particular those aimed at guaranteeing access to education, through the adoption of the National University Act. It noted the challenges and limitations identified in the national report and mentioned some traditional practices that could still affect the equal participation of members of the society, in particular women.

42. Armenia, while welcoming the measures taken to ratify international human rights treaties and encouraged Solomon Islands to step up efforts regarding the core treaties that have not yet been ratified. Armenia also welcomed the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls and the steps to promote education for all. It noted that there were still challenges to be addressed, such as the inadequate education infrastructure, in particular, as it affected girls.

43. On the issue of trafficking, the delegation responded that Solomon Islands was committed to strengthening its border security by reviewing the Immigration Act so that it also covered transnational crimes.

44. The delegation explained that the Political Parties Integrity Act required 10 per cent of political parties' candidates to be women. Weaknesses in the Act were being reviewed by the Electoral Commission and relevant government institutions. The delegation stated that elections had been held successfully in 2014 under a new biometric system of voting, following assistance from the United Kingdom, the United Nations and Australia.

45. The delegation stated that the Child and Family Welfare Bill would be presented at the first sitting of Parliament in 2016 and that legislation against corruption was currently being drafted. The delegation explained that the anti-corruption legislation and the legislation to protect whistle-blowers were expected to be presented to Parliament within its next two sittings.

46. The delegation was pleased to report that the overdue periodic reports under the Convention on the Rights of the Child had received Cabinet approval and would soon be submitted to the Committee. The process for ratifying the Optional Protocols relating to the sale of children and armed conflict was gaining momentum.

47. Regarding the strengthening of the gender equality framework, a new economic empowerment strategy was launched to increase women's access to economic opportunities. The policies on gender and elimination of violence against women were currently under review. Solomon Islands committed to strengthening its border security by reviewing the Immigration Act so that it covers transnational crimes.

48. Australia appreciated the efforts made since the previous universal periodic review, including reforms to ensure voter confidence and participation in the 2014 election. It welcomed the outreach efforts by the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, which have increased the reporting of sexual and gender-based violence to the police. Australia remained concerned that Solomon Islands was a source and destination country for people trafficking, while recognizing its long-standing abolition of the death penalty.

49. Benin appreciated the progress made by Solomon Islands in the implementation of various recommendations from the previous review, including the use of the biometric voter registration for the 2014 election, the constitutional reform process and the drafting of legislation for the protection of children. It encouraged Solomon Islands to pursue efforts to harmonize national legislation with international human rights instruments and in relation to the sustainable management of natural resources.

50. Brazil appreciated the adoption of the Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Policy. It encouraged the stepping up of efforts to further promote the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly the rights to adequate housing, safe drinking water and sanitation, including through international cooperation. Brazil welcomed the adoption of the Family Protection Act, but remained concerned about the high rate of violence, including sexual violence, against women and girls. Brazil encouraged the promotion of women's human rights, particularly through human rights education and awareness-raising.

51. Canada acknowledged Solomon Islands' renewed commitment to passing the Child and Family Welfare Bill and encouraged consultations with all stakeholders for its prompt adoption and implementation. Canada recognized the steps taken towards establishing an independent national human rights institution, including through a provision in the 2014 draft federal Constitution and encouraged the establishment of such an institution.

52. Chile welcomed the delegation and valued the content of the national report which sets out progress made in the area of human rights.

53. Cuba highlighted the adoption of legislation to combat domestic violence as an important achievement for the protection of women and children. It recognized improvements made in the norms and standards of the correctional services and the efforts made to address climate change. It recognized progress made in the area of the right to health, to which Cuba had contributed. Cuba urged the international community to continue to support Solomon Islands.

54. Cyprus commended the measures taken by Solomon Islands to implement its international human rights obligations. In particular, it welcomed the enactment of the

Immigration Act in 2012 and the Immigration Regulations in 2013, which criminalize people smuggling and the trafficking of human beings.

55. The delegation stated that the draft federal Constitution contained provisions to protect many human rights. The delegation reiterated that the electoral law needed serious consideration as it was still weak in ensuring the participation of women.

56. The delegation agreed that new legislation was needed to address the issues of the management and exploitation of forests in Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands has 800 islands and 10 provinces, with 90 per cent of land owned by customary landowners and the rest owned by Government through the Land Commissioner. The delegation explained that the present Government would like to see the percentages reversed with 90 per cent of the land registered and a modern land tenure system established, and thus, the Lands Title Act 1969 would need to be reviewed.

57. The delegation reported on the paucity of permanent housing in the villages and that the Government had committed to budgeting for housing, especially in areas prone to natural disasters, and for the supply of water, in particular to install water tanks in remote areas.

58. Denmark was pleased that Solomon Islands had accepted recommendations during the first review to ratify the Convention against Torture. It asked about the concrete steps being taken in that regard. Denmark referred to the Convention against Torture Initiative, which worked through government-to-government exchange and cooperation, and stood ready to assist the Solomon Islands if deemed helpful.

59. Djibouti welcomed the progress made in terms of access to justice, health and education services and gender equality. Djibouti highlighted the efforts to create an independent national human rights institution and encouraged the continuation of those efforts. Djibouti referred to the impact of climate change, in particular with regard to population that might be forced to migrate from their ancestral territories to other areas, which could result in tensions and conflicts with host communities. It encouraged the promotion of understanding among decision-makers of the consequences of the exploitation of forest resources and expressed concern about the rights of indigenous peoples.

60. Egypt commended the efforts of Solomon Islands in implementing 112 out of 115 recommendations from the first review. Egypt recognized the measures adopted for the protection of women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and minority groups. It was encouraged by, inter alia, the development of a National Action Plan against Human Trafficking and the establishment of the community-based rehabilitation unit to promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

61. Estonia encouraged Solomon Islands to continue its efforts to become a party to all core international human rights instruments and to cooperate fully with the United Nations special procedures and treaty bodies. It encouraged Solomon Islands to take further steps for the full implementation of the treaties it has already ratified and their incorporation into domestic law. Estonia welcomed the new legislation, including the Child and Family Welfare Bill and the Family Protection Act, and encouraged the implementation of such policies as the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls. Estonia hoped that stakeholders' consultations would lead to a better reflection of international human rights principles in the federal Constitution, including the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

62. Fiji understood the difficulties faced by archipelagic States in ensuring the implementation of legislation and policies across the country, particularly when they affected long-held attitudes and behaviours regarded by some as culturally acceptable. Fiji noted the significant steps taken to review legislation which currently did not prohibit

corporal punishment of children in school and the home. Fiji commended the passing of the Family Protection Act in 2014 and the steps being taken to implement the provisions on sexual abuse and domestic violence. Fiji noted the barriers to its effective implementation due to traditional attitudes in the Police Force and the judiciary, which sometimes encouraged reconciliation under pressure without putting in place measures to protect against further violence.

63. France welcomed the efforts made by Solomon Islands since the last review in 2011, notably the measures taken to prevent and combat domestic violence, in particular the establishment of shelters for victims. It encouraged Solomon Islands to continue those efforts.

64. Germany noted the positive developments in Solomon Islands in the fields of social cohesion, governance and human trafficking and encouraged it to take further steps to strengthen the national human rights situation. Germany welcomed the passing of the Family Protection Act in 2014, which criminalizes domestic violence.

65. The delegation noted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the lead Ministry on ratification of treaties for 2016-2017. The delegation stated that consideration might be given to sharing the task of coordination in relation to ratification of human rights instruments with the Ombudsman's Office, as that office was open to receiving representations from civil society.

66. The delegation explained that a review of the policy on the rights of persons with disabilities had been prepared by the Ministry of Health and would be presented to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

67. Ghana noted that Solomon Islands had enacted legislation aimed at upholding human rights, including the Police Act and the Immigration Act. It was concerned about ongoing land disputes between tribes and encouraged Solomon Islands to consider publishing the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to implement the recommendations addressing the root causes of land ownership.

68. Indonesia supported the efforts of Solomon Islands to enact specific legislation which criminalizes all forms of violence against women, promotes greater participation and representation of women in public life and promotes gender equality in the school curriculum. Indonesia noted the situation of migrant workers, welcomed the efforts towards establishing a national human rights institution and encouraged the involvement of civil society as a partner of the Government.

69. Iraq welcomed the continued efforts made by Solomon Islands in the fields of public health services, gender equality and education since the last review. It also welcomed the enactment of the Immigration Act, which prohibits human trafficking, and of the Family Protection Act, which criminalizes domestic violence.

70. Israel commended Solomon Islands for the creation of the National UPR Working Committee and the National Risk Resilient Development Working Group and for the endorsement of the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls. It also commended Solomon Islands for the recent adoption of laws such as the Immigration Act, the Immigration Regulations, the National University Act, the Police Act and the Family Protection Act.

71. Italy welcomed the progress achieved by Solomon Islands since the first cycle of the review and the priority assigned to poverty alleviation and climate change through the National Development Strategy, 2011-2020 and the Climate Change Policy, 2012-2017. It encouraged the authorities to continue prioritizing the issue of combating human trafficking and welcomed the measures taken to combat human trafficking and took note of the steps taken to combat violence and discrimination against women.

72. Jamaica commended Solomon Islands for the creation of the National UPR Working Committee and urged continued collaboration with the United Nations to improve the submission of human rights reports. It noted as positive the strides made to combat domestic violence and the importance of young mothers returning to school in helping to break the cycle of poverty, teenage pregnancy and domestic abuse. Jamaica commended Solomon Islands for its fortitude in the wake of an economy beset by recent natural disasters.

73. Maldives welcomed the adoption of a number of laws and the ratification of a number of ILO fundamental conventions. It encouraged Solomon Islands to continue reaching out to international partners, including OHCHR, for financial, technical and other assistance towards the promotion and protection of human rights. Maldives commended efforts to highlight the vulnerabilities of small island developing States and national action taken to combat the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

74. The delegation indicated that the Government was taking concrete steps towards ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and had established a national and provincial coordinating committee with field offices and coordinators on disability in nearly all major provinces. The delegation reported that a national disability inclusive policy existed and that disability was a key priority issue under the National Health Strategy.

75. The delegation referred to challenges in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women due to capacity and budget constraints and a lack of understanding about the Conventions.

76. Regarding the advancement of women's rights, the delegation stated that greater support from government sectors, civil society and development partners was needed to ensure the effective implementation of the new Family Protection Act.

77. The delegation stated that the Immigration Act contained provisions relating to trafficking in persons. A national action plan and an enforcement unit for human trafficking were in place as well as a trafficking in persons advisory committee in the Department of Immigration and Border Security. The delegation indicated that consideration was being given to drafting a stand-alone law against human trafficking.

78. The delegation referred to the collective position of small island developing States on the issue of climate change at the international conference held in Paris, France, in December 2015 and to the implementation of the outcome document of that conference. The delegation referred to the challenges faced by persons living in coastal areas and by Solomon Islands in providing safer settlements inland with water supply and other services. Solomon Islands would welcome international assistance in that regard.

79. The delegation stated that the delays in implementing the Family Protection Act were due to the need to train police and raise public awareness about that Act.

80. Mexico welcomed the setting up by Solomon Islands of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System and the legislative measures taken to criminalize domestic violence. It also welcomed the adoption of the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls and the Solomon Islands National Council of Women Elections Campaign Strategy, 2014-2015. Mexico acknowledged efforts to guarantee universal education and the development of a national plan on HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

81. Montenegro recognized the efforts made by Solomon Islands to improve the protection of human rights, despite a backdrop of limited capacities and resource constraints. It welcomed the adoption of the Family Protection Act, which criminalizes domestic violence, and efforts to establish an anti-corruption commission. Montenegro

encouraged Solomon Islands to seek and use technical assistance from OHCHR and relevant United Nations agencies in the country to strengthen its national capacities and fulfil its reporting obligations.

82. Morocco welcomed, in particular, the ratification of the ILO Conventions concerning child labour and discrimination and the cooperation with United Nations human rights mechanisms. Morocco noted particular laws and policies adopted by Solomon Islands in relation to the right to an adequate standard of living, the status of women and children, non-discrimination and gender equality, education, environment and climate change.

83. Myanmar noted as positive the adoption of the National Development Strategy, 2011-2020, which reflects Solomon Islands' commitment to reform in sectors such as poverty alleviation, health, education and climate change. Myanmar also took note of the Climate Change Policy, 2012-2017 to address climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk management.

84. Namibia acknowledged the challenges faced by Solomon Islands in fulfilling the needs of its citizens as a consequence of its small economy, limited market opportunities and topography. Namibia commended the Immigration Act and encouraged Solomon Islands to continue its efforts to enhance the legislation to combat internal trafficking activities. Namibia took note of the National Development Strategy, 2011-2020 and its core objectives.

85. The Netherlands, while commending human rights progress made within the legislative and policy frameworks, was particularly concerned about discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The Netherlands echoed the concerns of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women over the implementation of legislation on violence against women. It noted that the Rome Statue had not yet been ratified.

86. New Zealand recognized the commitment that small island developing States demonstrated in engaging with the Human Rights Council and the universal periodic review. It acknowledged the commitment to streamline human rights reporting and improve inter-agency coordination. New Zealand noted that Solomon Islands continued to have one of the world's highest rates of violence against women and encouraged engagement with communities, villages, families, churches and all levels of Government to ensure that violence against women and children is considered culturally unacceptable.

87. Regarding the exploitation of migrant workers, the delegation indicated that current legislation, including the Labour Act, provided sufficient protection. The delegation reported that the Labour Act was under review and that consideration was being given to the review of other legislation in relation to their conformity with ILO principles.

88. The delegation highlighted that a feasibility study was being carried out on the establishment of a children's commission to consider complaints relating to the rights of the child.

89. The delegation stated that the Education Bill, which would be presented to Parliament, provided for the abolition of the use of corporal punishment in schools.

90. The delegation reported on the Government's plans regarding drafting reports for treaties that have not yet been signed, such as the Convention against Torture, and to undertake a holistic approach to stakeholders' consultation on the matter, during the tenure of the current Government.

91. The delegation indicated that discussions within Government were ongoing regarding the ratification of the Rome Statute.

92. Nigeria noted with satisfaction the enactment of the Immigration Act and the Immigration Regulations, aimed at tackling human trafficking. It also noted the establishment of the National University Act in providing for quality education; the enactment of the Public Finance Management Act to build transparency in the management of public finance; and the proposal in the draft federal Constitution for the establishment of a national human rights institution.

93. Pakistan commended the Family Protection Act, the Land Titles Act, the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls, the National Education Action Plan and the National Policy on Disability Inclusive Development. It also appreciated the efforts made to alleviate poverty, support vulnerable members of society, ensure protection from natural disasters and improve governance to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

94. Panama welcomed the progress made by Solomon Islands in promoting the rights to education and health, reducing youth unemployment and combating domestic violence and human trafficking. It highlighted the adoption of the Immigration Act, the Family Protection Act, the National Development Strategy and other measures aimed at eradicating poverty and providing support to vulnerable groups. Panama expressed concern over practices that discriminated against women and were socially acceptable.

95. Paraguay welcomed the ratification of several ILO fundamental conventions and invited Solomon Islands to ratify the main international human rights conventions. It also took note of the use of the Millennium Development Goals as indicators for the implementation of the National Development Strategy, 2011-2020. Paraguay welcomed the establishment of a committee to follow up on the universal periodic review recommendations. Paraguay requested additional information, including on measures taken to combat the practice of the bride price.

96. The Philippines acknowledged the progress made, including the ratification of ILO fundamental conventions and the development of a 10-year National Development Strategy. It recognized the improvements to strengthen the democratic system, enhance correctional facilities and combat the negative impact of climate change. The Philippines noted the remaining challenges regarding gender equality and violence against women and children and encouraged endeavours to increase the participation of women in rural areas.

97. In its closing remarks, the delegation referred not only to the significant achievements made so far, but also recognized that much still remained to be achieved, which would take time, resources and commitment.

98. With respect to sexual orientation and gender identity, the delegation stated that the Government maintained the same position. The delegation thanked all the speakers who participated in the dialogue. It also acknowledged its development partners, national non-governmental organizations and civil society for working together with Solomon Islands in the universal periodic review process and looked forward to continuing such work in the future.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations**

99. The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue and listed below have been examined by Solomon Islands and enjoy the support of Solomon Islands:

99.1 Ratify and/or accede promptly to, as appropriate, the three Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Uruguay); Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (Switzerland); Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (Panama);

99.2 Ensure that the rights of children are protected by codifying the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the national legislation and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (Germany);

99.3 Progress domestic child protection legislation and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (Australia);

99.4 Carry out training activities and exchange of experiences on human rights with other countries of the Pacific Islands (Cuba);

99.5 Seek the required technical assistance in order to meet its various human rights obligations (Sierra Leone);

99.6 Implement those measures that the Government of Solomon Islands committed to promoting, in line with paragraph 125 of your national report (Panama);

99.7 Continue to work closely with international human rights institutions (Pakistan);

99.8 Submit its overdue reports to the relevant treaty bodies (Sierra Leone);

99.9 Present, before the next review, the combined report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Uruguay);

99.10 Adopt a national plan of action against sexual exploitation of children and against child labour. Raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to internationally accepted standards and ensure that juvenile justice protection is accorded to all children up to the age of 18 years, as previously recommended (Slovenia);

99.11 Take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of children's rights, in line with the international obligations of Solomon Islands, particularly by putting in place a juvenile justice system (France);

99.12 Continue efforts to guarantee access to girls, boys, women and persons with disabilities to health services, education services, drinking water and sanitation (Mexico);

** The conclusions and recommendations have not been edited.

99.13 Enhance the protection of children from abuse, including prostitution, child pornography and forced marriages (United States of America);

99.14 Provide constitutional and legal protection for children against all forms of violence at home and at school (Fiji);

99.15 Legislative protection for children includes criminal sanctions for all forms of violence against children (Fiji);

99.16 Combat stereotypes regarding the role of women, in particular by sensitizing the population in rural areas (Argentina);

99.17 Promote a culture of equality through equal participation of all members of society and particularly the participation of women in rural areas (Morocco);

99.18 Do not discriminate against women in different political economic and social areas (Iraq);

99.19 Continue to implement laws and regulations for the protection and socioeconomic growth of women and the rights of children (Pakistan);

99.20 Increase gender equality (Cyprus);

99.21 Strengthen strategies that are aimed at increasing gender equality and the economic empowerment of women (Nigeria);

99.22 Take steps towards the effective implementation of the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development and the National Policy on Ending Violence against Women, through coordination, advocacy, awareness-raising and resource allocation (Canada);

99.23 Develop a concrete action plan to encourage and support women's active involvement in economic and political life, including effective measures to increase women's involvement in the economy and formal political institutions by addressing existing legal, social, and cultural barriers (United States of America);

99.24 Take measures to ensure non-discrimination against women within all sectors of society, particularly with regard to access to education and employment, and to amend and align all existing laws in this regard (Namibia);

99.25 Use the advantage of its matrilineal society to improve women's access to power, especially in relation to land issues; raise the social standing of women and girls; increase access to safe sanitary facilities and encourage the rearing of confident boys and men (Jamaica);

99.26 Take effective measures to increase women's participation in public and political life as well as in the labour market, in particular considering temporary special measures such as statutory quotas or incentives (Republic of Korea);

99.27 Intensify efforts to facilitate the participation of women in political and public affairs (Argentina);

99.28 Continue its efforts to facilitate greater participation and representation of women in public offices and in higher levels of decision-making positions (Israel);

99.29 Take further steps to increase participation by women in Parliament, and in government leadership positions, including through further consideration of temporary special measures (New Zealand);

99.30 Conduct awareness raising and sensitization programmes to empower women, advance women's rights and ensure gender equality (Maldives);

99.31 Consider taking all necessary measures to eliminate violence and discrimination against women in all areas of public and private life (Mexico);

99.32 Strengthen, through adequate sanctions and awareness-raising campaigns, the fight against gender violence. In this regard, consider the adoption of measures, such as quotas, incentives and/or preferential treatment, that promote the incorporation of women into education and the economy, both in the public and private spheres (Chile);

99.33 Step up measures aimed at eliminating violence against women and establish clear monitoring objectives for the implementation of policies against violence against women (Slovenia);

99.34 Take stronger measures to combat domestic violence and protect its victims (Maldives);

99.35 Ensure the effective implementation of the Family Protection Act of 2014 (Italy);

99.36 Establish appropriate policies to account for and remedy any deficiencies in the application of the Family Protection Act of 2014 and adopt a strategy involving civil society in combating and eliminating domestic violence, sexual abuse and any other form violence against women (Uruguay);[1]

99.37 Take measures to ensure that the police respond to and investigate complaints regarding violence against women and that the perpetrators are prosecuted and punished, and collect data on the number of prosecutions and convictions, including at the provincial level (Netherlands);

99.38 Strengthen the role of the Family Violence Support Unit of the Police and provide all police forces with adequate training on how to treat cases of violence against women and domestic violence and how to provide support to victims (Italy);

99.39 Give more budgetary allocation to the training of police officers and the judiciary to ensure that women have equal and substantive access to justice under the Family Protection Act (Fiji);

99.40 Strengthen the SAFENET Referral Network system for women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse and consider establishing in all provinces shelters accessible to all women, including those with disabilities (Republic of Korea);

99.41 Strengthen the SAFENET referral system for women who are victims of violence, establish shelters for women in all provinces of the Solomon

[1] The recommendation was read as follows: Establish appropriate policies to account for and remedy any deficiencies in the application of the Act of 2014, and adopt a strategy involving civil society in combating and elimination of domestic violence, sexual abuse and any other form violence against women.

Islands, and ensure that they are accessible without discrimination, including to women with disabilities (Canada);

99.42 **Take measures to combat violence against women and children and to ensure effective complaint mechanisms for victims (Namibia);**

99.43 **Increase its efforts to address violence against women and children as an urgent priority. This includes fully implementing the Family Protection Act and providing necessary resourcing to ensure that vulnerable women and children have access to both safe dwellings and mechanisms of justice (New Zealand);**

99.44 **Create and strengthen, where appropriate, legislative and other measures to address the sexual exploitation of women and girls (Trinidad and Tobago);**

99.45 **Establish an independent body to monitor and promote human rights, including progress made on the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's recommendations with regard to abuses committed during the Tensions (Australia);**

99.46 **Increase the access of the rural population to the formal justice system (Trinidad and Tobago);**

99.47 **Pursue efforts to guarantee the effective functioning of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (France);**

99.48 **Continue making progress in eradicating poverty, through the application of their social policies aimed at increasing the living standards of its people, in particular the most vulnerable sectors of the population (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);**

99.49 **Allocate the same attention and resources to both the human rights to water and to sanitation (Spain);**

99.50 **Improve access to health services (Trinidad and Tobago);**

99.51 **Strengthen the education system to reduce gender disparity and improve the education standard throughout the country (Maldives);**

99.52 **Take the necessary steps to improve education infrastructure with the aim of ensuring girls' access to school (Armenia);**

99.53 **Permit and encourage female students to return to formal education after giving birth, in keeping with the recommendation made during the review of the Education Act (Jamaica);**

99.54 **Increase support for families to facilitate the pursuance by children of primary and secondary education (Trinidad and Tobago);**

99.55 **Further strengthen the necessary measures to address climate change, environmental degradation and disaster management (Myanmar).**

100. **The following recommendations will be examined by Solomon Islands which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the thirty-second session of the Human Rights Council, in June 2016:**

100.1 **Continue efforts taken towards the ratification of international human rights instruments and harmonization of national legislation (Morocco);**

100.2 **Consider signing and ratifying those international human rights instruments to which it is not yet a party to (Argentina);**

100.3 **Ratify and implement all major international human rights treaties (Slovenia);**

100.4 **Ratify and accede to the international treaties to which it is not yet a party (Iraq);**

100.5 **Sign and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in line with recommendation accepted in the first cycle of the review (Brazil);**

100.6 **Consider ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocols (Ghana);**

100.7 **Consider ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Italy) (Republic of Korea) (Philippines);**

100.8 **Continue and step up its efforts towards the ratification of or accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Indonesia); Redouble its efforts for the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Chile);**

100.9 **Complete its international commitments by ratifying on a priority basis the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (France);**

100.10 **Continue its efforts to complete the accession to the relevant instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Mexico);**

100.11 **Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Portugal) (Algeria) (Montenegro);**

100.12 **Consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Italy);**

100.13 **Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Portugal) (Australia);**

100.14 **Consider ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Republic of Korea) (Ghana) (Philippines);**

100.15 **Continue and step up its efforts in the ratification of or accession to the Convention against Torture (Indonesia);**

100.16 **Continue its efforts to complete the accession to the relevant instruments such as the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Mexico);**

100.17 **Intensify its efforts to ratify the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Denmark); Redouble its efforts for the ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Chile);**

100.18 **Ratify the Convention against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Portugal) (Montenegro);**

100.19 **Ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, that it has already signed (France); Ratify the core human rights instruments, including the Convention against**

Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Sierra Leone);

100.20 **Consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Ghana) (Philippines);**

100.21 **Continue its efforts to improve measures to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers in the country, including to consider accession of the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Indonesia);**

100.22 **Continue its efforts to complete the accession to the relevant instruments such as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Mexico); Redouble its efforts for the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Chile);**

100.23 **Ratify the core human rights instruments, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Sierra Leone);**

100.24 **Consider ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Republic of Korea) (Philippines) and its Optional Protocol (Ghana);**

100.25 **Continue its efforts to complete the accession to the relevant instruments such as the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (Mexico);**

100.26 **Take further measures to ensure persons with disabilities enjoy their rights, in particular by ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Algeria);**

100.27 **Sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (France);**

100.28 **Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Slovenia) (Panama); Ratify more human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Israel);**

100.29 **Consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Ghana);**

100.30 **Sign and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (France);**

100.31 **Ratify the core human rights instruments, including the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Sierra Leone); Redouble its efforts for the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Chile);**

100.32 **Accede to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Armenia);**

100.33 **Consider ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Ghana); Take concrete steps towards acceding to/ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Cyprus);**

100.34 **Ratify the Rome Statute and fully align its national legislation with its provisions (Portugal);**

100.35 **Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Canada) (New Zealand);**

100.36 **Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and accede to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (Estonia);**

100.37 **Sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty (New Zealand);**

100.38 **Ratify the Palermo Protocol (Panama);**

100.39 **Ratify ILO Conventions No. 169 (indigenous and tribal peoples) and No. 189 (domestic workers) (Benin);**

100.40 **Accelerate the process of adopting a new federal Constitution (Philippines);**

100.41 **Include in the new federal Constitution provisions on equality and non-discrimination between man and woman, in line with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Paraguay);**

100.42 **Repeal all legislation incompatible with the principle of equality and non-discrimination, including provisions of customary law, as recommended by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Slovenia);**

100.43 **Ensure that those laws related to acquisition, transmission, conserving and loss of nationality are in line with the principle of non-discrimination (Paraguay);**

100.44 **Ensure that national laws are in line with international human rights standards (Philippines);**

100.45 **Continue to promote and protect the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all its citizens (Nigeria);**

100.46 **Take steps to establish an independent national human rights institution (New Zealand);**

100.47 **Hasten the process of establishing the national human rights commission in line with the proposal of the 2014 draft Constitution (Nigeria);**

100.48 **Take all the necessary measures to establish an independent national human rights institution with "A" status, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Portugal);**

100.49 **Mandate the Office of the Ombudsman or another entity to receive and address complaints by women about discrimination (Canada);**

100.50 **Establish and set up a national human rights institution in conformity with the Paris Principles (Chile);**

100.51 **Increase the mandates of existing institutions such as the Ombudsman's Office and the Leadership Code Commission, to address human rights issues (Jamaica);**

100.52 **Incorporate human rights and the needs for their implementation and funding in its National Development Strategy (Cuba);**

100.53 **Further enhance its measures for the promotion and protection of human rights through, among others, developing a comprehensive human rights national action plan (Indonesia);**

100.54 **Strengthen the national follow-up systems for monitoring international recommendations, taking necessary measures for coordinating such systems and provide them with the necessary financial resources in order to fulfil their objectives (Paraguay);**

100.55 **Consider developing a broad programme on human rights which includes training and capacity-building for the public sector (Egypt);**

100.56 **Step up policies to protect children in order to eliminate violence against girls and boys, as well as combating child labour (Mexico);**

100.57 **End all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings, including in the home and in schools, by enforcing its prohibition, as previously recommended (Slovenia);**

100.58 **Prohibit corporal punishment of children in all settings, including in the home (Estonia);**

100.59 **Abolish customary laws and practices that establish child marriage and also the payment of a bride price (Panama);**

100.60 **Combat early marriage and the practice of bride price, in line with what was said by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (Spain);**

100.61 **Reform the Penal Code with a provision encompassing the definition and criminalization of all forms of sexual violence, including rape (Sierra Leone);**

100.62 **Allocate the necessary human, technical and financial resources to the police services, at both local and national levels, so that they can address all complaints of violence against women (Switzerland);**

100.63 **Implement measures to punish traffickers and prevent child prostitution and forced marriage (Australia);**

100.64 **Enforce fully recently introduced legislation to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, including prosecutions for individuals suspected of human trafficking (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

100.65 **Pass a law to criminalize all forms of human trafficking and ratify the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (United States of America);**

100.66 **Further strengthen its measures to combat all forms of trafficking in persons and protect and rehabilitate its victims (Egypt);**

100.67 **Punish sex tourism and particularly prosecute the sexual exploitation of girls through pornography, sexual abuse and rape (Spain);**

100.68 **Disseminate publically the report of its Truth and Reconciliation Commission and implement the recommendations it proposed (Switzerland);**

100.69 Introduce freedom of information legislation in compliance with international standards (Estonia);

100.70 Step up efforts to ensure that primary education is compulsory as well as free of charge, and improve the capacity of all educational institutions, importantly through the increase of budget allocations towards education (Republic of Korea);

100.71 Make primary education compulsory, ensuring particularly the inclusion of girls and persons with disabilities in the educational system (Spain);

100.72 Ratify the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Djibouti);

100.73 Continue with its efforts to develop a national policy for the benefit of persons with disabilities, including the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Germany);

100.74 Work on improving the physical access for persons with disabilities (Trinidad and Tobago);

100.75 Implement measures to ensure the full enjoyment of rights by persons with disabilities, especially regarding inclusive education and development (Israel);

100.76 Ensure that corporations, particularly those active in the forest industry, respect human and environmental rights, based on the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Switzerland);

100.77 Create a permanent national protection group responsible for addressing displacements caused by climate change or natural disasters (Djibouti);

100.78 Approve the roadmap on the reduction of emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation, on the role of conservation and sustainable forest management and on the reinforcement of forest carbon stocks (Benin).

101. The recommendations below did not enjoy the support of Solomon Islands and would thus be noted:

101.1 Take measures to prevent and combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, including by decriminalizing sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex (Brazil);

101.2 Adopt measures to ensure full enjoyment of rights and equality to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, both in terms of legislation as well as on policies and practices (Israel);

101.3 Extend the scope of the Penal Code (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Bill of 2015 to clarify existing, and create new, legislation to protect the human rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community (United Kingdom);

101.4 Adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, including on discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and repeal any laws which result in, or are likely to result in, the discrimination, prosecution and punishment of people solely for their sexual orientation or gender identity (Netherlands);

101.5 **Decriminalize sexual activities between consenting adults of the same sex, as previously recommended (Slovenia);**

101.6 **Decriminalize sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex (Chile).**

102. **All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.**

Annex

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Solomon Islands was headed by Mr. Milner TOZAKA, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, and composed of the following members:

- Mr. Joseph MA'AHANUA – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade;
- Ms. Ethel SIGIMANU – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs;
- Mr. Karl KUPER – Under-Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs;
- Ms. Elsie TALOAFIRI – Coordinator, Community Based Rehabilitation (Disabilities Division), Ministry of Health and Medical Services;
- Ms. Mirriam LIDIMANI – Legal Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade;
- Ms. Jolina TAUSINGA – Senior Desk Officer, United Nations and Americas Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade;
- Mr. Barrett SALATO – Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Solomon Islands in Geneva.

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Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Latvia

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its twenty-fourth session from 18 to 29 January 2016. The review of Latvia was held at the 13th meeting on 26 January 2016. The delegation of Latvia was headed by the State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Andrejs Pildegovičs. At its 17th meeting, held on 28 January 2016, the Working Group adopted the report on Latvia.

2. On 12 January 2016, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Latvia: Ethiopia, Germany and Indonesia.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Latvia:

(a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/24/LVA/1);

(b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/24/LVA/2);

(c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/24/LVA/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by the Czech Republic, Germany Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was transmitted to Latvia through the troika. These questions are available on the extranet of the universal periodic review.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. Latvia emphasized its strong support for the peer review process and that it would continue its active and constructive participation in the Working Group. The national report had been elaborated by an inter-institutional working group in consultation with non-governmental organizations and the Office of the Ombudsman. Latvia thanked States that had sent questions in advance.

6. Latvia reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Its history had taught it that freedom and human rights should never be taken for granted. The protection of human rights had been an indispensable part of it foreign and domestic policies, since it regained its independence in 1990 after decades of Soviet occupation. Its commitment in the field of human rights had been demonstrated by its accession to the major United Nations human rights instruments and the regular submission of reports to their monitoring mechanisms. Its human rights' record was thus regularly scrutinized, including through the European regional mechanisms.

7. Latvia stated that it was proud to have been a member of the Human Rights Council since 2015. It had continued its long-term initiative to encourage States to issue a standing invitation to all the special procedures.

8. Latvia highlighted the importance it attached to its engagement with civil society. It had ensured civil society's engagement in decision-making at all levels and this collaboration was constantly being strengthened. Transparent and inclusive governance was being promoted through new technologies. Parliamentary and Government meetings were broadcast live on the Internet; citizens could propose new legislation via the Internet.

9. Latvia drew attention to its achievements since the first review in 2011, commencing with the adoption in 2014 of the Preamble of the Constitution which reasserted the principles of democracy, pluralism and human rights embodied the Constitution and also reaffirmed the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to preserve and develop their language and ethnic and cultural identity. In 2013, the Amendments to the Citizenship Law came into force significantly extending the scope for dual citizenship and further simplifying the procedure for granting citizenship and naturalization. For example, citizenship was granted automatically to children of stateless persons and non-citizens.

10. Latvia was pleased to note that in March 2015 the Office of the Ombudsman had been accredited by the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights with "A" status. The Government had constantly increased its funding to ensure its effective functioning. It also noted that in November 2015 a new institution — the Internal Security Office — commenced operations in order to ensure the efficient and independent investigation of criminal offences committed by officials of the law enforcement agencies.

11. Latvia stated that it had acceded to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. It would continue to evaluate the possibility of acceding to other international human rights instruments in due course.

12. Latvia stated that the principles of gender equality were taken into account in every policy planning and policymaking process. The Gender Equality Action Plan (2012-2014) aimed at an efficient, integrated and coordinated approach to gender equality. It noted that in 2015 the *Global Gender Gap Report* had ranked Latvia among the 20 leading countries in the field of gender equality and the report concluded that Latvia had fully closed the gender gap in the fields of health and survival as well as education attainment. Latvia also noted its strength in women's economic participation and provided further relevant statistics. Recognizing that there was always room for further improvement, for example, in regard to the gender pay gap, a new policy planning document was being elaborated.

13. Latvia had intensified its efforts to eliminate domestic violence. In 2014, complex amendments introducing temporary protection against violence had entered into force. It had also undertaken to accede to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) by 2018. Other measures that it had implemented included the provision of quality social rehabilitation services, training of experts and public awareness-raising on domestic violence.

14. As a regional leader in the fight against human trafficking, Latvia had continued to strengthen its efforts in this field. A number of improvements to the normative framework had been made, for example, specifying a definition of human trafficking. Other measures related to building the capacity of law enforcement agencies in this field and increased State-funded support for victims, compensation and rehabilitation.

15. Measures to improve conditions of detention in prisons had been reinforced. A comprehensive audit had been carried out in 2013 and 2014 to develop proposals for their improvement. The relevant international standards had been enshrined in the respective legal acts. The reforms in the period from 2011 to 2015 had led to the number of prisoners

being been reduced by 30 per cent; these measures included amendments to the Criminal Law in 2013 that reformed the system of penalties and provided for the use of alternative penalties to deprivation of liberty.

16. Latvia highlighted the anti-discrimination provisions enshrined in the Constitution and legislation. In 2013, the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination of Natural Persons — Performers of Economic Activities was adopted and in 2014 the Criminal Law was amended providing criminal liability for discrimination due to racial, national, ethnic or religious belonging or for the violation of the prohibition of any other type of discrimination, if substantial harm is caused. A wide range of policy measures had also been implemented, including the further development of the discrimination monitoring system, the review of existing anti-discrimination norms and educational and awareness-raising events.

17. Latvia stated that it had been working to reduce discrimination against Roma and to ensure them equal opportunities, especially in the field of education, and noted especially among its policy measures the programme for professional training of teacher's assistants with a Roma background. In relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, Latvia had paid attention to the training of experts, including from the Police, on issues related to protection of those persons' rights and it highlighted its cooperation with the European organizations and agencies working in this field and with civil society.

18. On the subject of hate crimes, Latvia stated that the Criminal Law provided for criminal liability for incitement to national, ethnic, racial or religious enmity. In addition, racist, national, ethnic or religious motives were defined as an aggravating circumstance. The same law also provided criminal liability for acts aimed at inciting hatred or enmity based on gender, age, disability of a person or any other characteristics, if substantial harm is caused. The authorities had stepped up efforts to monitor online hate speech and trained police experts in the field, including in collaboration with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

19. Latvia stated that it was proud of its tolerant, open and multilingual society. There were more than 150 ethnicities living in the country. Latvian policies had ensured protection of their rights and enjoyment of the culture, language and traditions of national minorities and they were engaged in policy-planning and decision-making processes.

20. The unique State education system of Latvia included minority education programmes in seven languages. Measures aimed at improving the quality of bilingual education were being implemented regularly. The examination results in general education schools were similar to those in schools implementing national minority education programmes; students at national minority schools earned even higher scores in some subjects. The Government provided free Latvian language courses for members of national minorities and their proficiency had improved such that more than 94 per cent of them could now communicate in Latvian in comparison with 23 per cent in 1989.

21. Latvia reported that, after the restoration of its independence in 1990, the temporary status of "non-citizen" had been established and was granted to persons who had immigrated during the period of Soviet occupation as a result of deliberate migration policy of the authorities of the Soviet Union and had lost citizenship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with its dissolution. These persons or their descendants had never been citizens of Latvia. Latvia had always stressed that the status of non-citizens was of a temporary nature. Latvian non-citizens were not stateless and this had been clearly stated in law. All preconditions for a successful naturalization process had been created and the process had repeatedly been simplified in accordance with international standards so as to be one of the most liberal in Europe. Almost 150,000 persons had chosen to become citizens of Latvia. At the same time non-citizens enjoyed the same social guarantees and

most of the rights guaranteed to Latvian citizens and enjoyed full legal protection in Latvia and full consular protection while living or travelling abroad.

22. Latvia underlined that the citizenship acquisition and naturalization process had been further simplified, including in 2013 through the granting the Latvian citizenship automatically to children of stateless persons and non-citizens. In total, 99 per cent of children born in Latvia in 2015 were citizens of Latvia. At the same time, Latvia accommodated 178 stateless persons and provided protection as a party to the relevant convention. Latvia requested that the distinction between the aforementioned groups be clearly observed during the interactive dialogue.

23. In order to tackle increased migration and forced displacement, in January 2016 the new Asylum Law had entered into force. Latvia stated that the new law had further expanded the rights of asylum seekers, including through increased State funded legal assistance. In November 2015, the Government had approved the Action Plan for the admission of relocated and resettled asylum seekers.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

24. Italy commended the achievements of Latvia in promoting gender equality and the creation of the Gender Equality Committee that strengthened the cooperation between institutions and civil society. It appreciated the amendments to criminal law that related to the prevention of domestic violence.

25. Jamaica noted the progress made by Latvia in the promotion of gender equality, societal integration, and protection of persons with disabilities. It had questions relating to the use of the Latvian language by members of national minorities, including with respect to their employment, and on the measures to reduce poverty and improve access to health care.

26. Kenya welcomed initiatives addressing challenges in the promotion of tolerance, inclusivity and non-discrimination. It commended programmes to integrate human rights into the curriculum and amendments to the Citizenship Law. It was concerned at the reported large proportion of stateless persons in Latvia.

27. Kyrgyzstan noted that Latvia was working to improve and strengthen human rights institutions in constructive cooperation with international mechanisms and the progress made in achieving gender equality, including the involvement of women in decision-making, especially in the economy.

28. Libya thanked Latvia for the comprehensive presentation in its national report.

29. Liechtenstein welcomed the efforts of Latvia for the elimination of discrimination against women and the fight against violence against women. It noted concerns about the lack of adequate and systematic assistance to victims of violence against women.

30. Lithuania commended Latvia for measures taken to implement recommendations from the first review, including in relation to naturalization, improved conditions for linguistic minorities to facilitate their integration, progress in the involvement of women in decision-making and in combating human trafficking.

31. Malaysia commended the efforts of Latvia in, inter alia, promoting gender equality tackling domestic violence and protecting persons with disabilities. It urged Latvia to monitor and prevent any activities that legitimized Nazism and violent extremist ideology.

32. Mexico welcomed the ratification of the second optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as legislative reforms

regarding trafficking in persons. It acknowledged and congratulated Latvia for its efforts to facilitate naturalization processes and gender equality.

33. Montenegro commended progress in women rights, especially women's involvement in decision-making and the e-governance platform that facilitated public initiatives for legislation. It asked about the results achieved in implementing the Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy in relation to national minorities.

34. Morocco appreciated the importance Latvia attached to the fight against racial discrimination and hate crimes, including through the criminalization of incitement to hatred and the modification of the Criminal Law making "racist" motivation an aggravating circumstance and other measures.

35. Namibia was pleased to note the progress made with regard to gender. It noted the programmes and policies that were under way to enhance societal integration and commended Latvia on its accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

36. The Philippines acknowledged the progress made by Latvia, including in promoting gender equality; protecting women against violence; promoting education and societal integration; and combating hate crimes. It encouraged Latvia to address the reported continuing cases of trafficking in persons.

37. Nicaragua welcomed the measures taken as follow-up to previous recommendations on the elimination of all forms of discrimination, as well as measures in favour of the empowerment of women.

38. Norway welcomed the significant progress made by Latvia since the first review, including the expansion of the rights' of victims of trafficking and congratulated Latvia for the accreditation of the Office of the Ombudsman with "A" status.

39. Pakistan was encouraged by such measures as the new laws to protect women against violence. It noted with concern that victims of trafficking were still treated as irregular migrants and the increased negative political discourse in relation to migrants, especially Muslims.

40. Paraguay welcomed the abolition of the death penalty in law and the amendments to the Law on Execution of Sentences. It encouraged Latvia to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

41. The Netherlands appreciated the positive role played by Latvia in the field of human rights and commended its track record in relation to press freedom. It encouraged Latvia to continue its efforts in areas such as the judicial system and non-discrimination.

42. Poland welcomed the efforts of Latvia to comply with the recommendations from the first review. It thanked Latvia for ensuring a good environment for the Polish minority, including the educational and cultural opportunities and possibility of freedom of association.

43. Portugal welcomed the positive steps Latvia had taken since the first review, such as the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

44. The Republic of Korea welcomed the adoption of amendments to the Citizenship Law and to the Law on Execution of Sentences, as well as the Gender Equality Action Plan (2012-2014) and the National Strategy for the Prevention of Human Trafficking (2014-2020).

45. The Republic of Moldova noted positively the improvements to the normative framework for combatting human trafficking following its recommendations in the first review. It asked whether the national identification and referral mechanism in that field was fully operational.

46. Latvia commenced its responses to the questions that had been raised and underlined that it had sustainable and long-term policies for the fight against human trafficking and a third national multi-institutional strategy had been adopted. Latvia had created guidelines for municipalities in the field and was implementing a multidisciplinary project using an evidence-based approach with a focus on preventing sham marriages.

47. Turning to the resettlement and integration of asylum seekers, Latvia provided more details of its action plan, which had been prepared in close cooperation with international organizations, civil society, municipalities and line ministries. Individual integration would be achieved through Latvian language courses from the very first day of arrival; access to the labour market; and social mentoring and social work, based on individual assessments.

48. In relation to combating violence against women, Latvia stated that it had adopted an effective system, based upon immediate response and had clear evidence for this.

49. Latvia also stressed that the Criminal Law provided for the concept of domestic violence and amendments to it in 2014 introduced widened criminal liability for rape, including spousal rape. In addition, the Ministry of Justice had prepared an amendment to improve the rights of victims of these offences. Furthermore, the Government had adopted the concept of preventive coercive measures, a new instrument for early prevention of offences. It aimed to achieve a long-term reduction in the number and reoccurrence of cases. In preparation for its accession to the Istanbul Convention Latvia planned to fully review its legislative framework and ensure full compliance with the Convention.

50. Responding to a question concerning hate crime, Latvia reminded the meeting of the provisions of the Criminal Law and added that it had been improved in 2015 with the additional definition of "substantial harm" arising from crimes involving discrimination.

51. Latvia reported that, in 2014, its legislation had been amended to add a specific crime to fight against torture and, in December 2015, to define the term of torture in full compliance with international conventions.

52. Latvia stressed that there were 178 stateless persons out of a population of 2 million and this could hardly be called "massive statelessness". In relation to the special category of Latvian residents called "non-citizens", Latvia again underlined that those people belonged to the State of Latvia, they enjoyed the full protection of the country, the same freedoms of movement across the European Union, all social rights and most of the political rights, except the rights to vote at the local and national elections.

53. Latvia stressed that it recognized the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of speech but it had condemned, and continued to condemn harshly, any expression of totalitarian ideologies, including Nazism.

54. Romania commended Latvia for initiative the cooperation with special procedures. It appreciated the strong commitment of Latvia to human rights through the implementation of the recommendations from the first review.

55. The Russian Federation expressed deep concern about the holding of regular public events that justified Nazism. It remained concerned about the situation of residents of Latvia who held the status of "non-citizen" and about the situation of linguistic minorities.

56. Saudi Arabia commended efforts to strengthen human rights and to guarantee the future of every citizen irrespective of their origins. It was concerned about the

manifestation of racial discrimination, discrimination based on religion belief, hatred against foreigners and Islamophobia.

57. Slovenia welcomed the measures undertaken since the first review, including the training of police on non-discrimination and on combating hate crimes. It was concerned, inter alia, that the detention of asylum seekers might have become the norm.

58. South Africa noted with appreciation the efforts of Latvia towards implementing recommendations received during its first review, in particular progress in preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

59. Spain congratulated Latvia for its reforms with respect to the acquisition of nationality. It welcomed the steps to combat discrimination, and recognized the advances made with regard to persons with disabilities, in particular their education and the relevant legislation.

60. Sweden welcomed the complete abolition of the death penalty in Latvia in 2012. It noted reports of overcrowding in places of detention, inter-prisoner violence, a lack of medical care for prisoners and a lack of foreign language skills among prison staff.

61. Tajikistan noted the readiness of Latvia to take measures to improve the national human rights mechanism, as well its efforts to combat trafficking in human beings and protect the rights of the child.

62. Thailand commended the progress made by Latvia to implement the recommendations from the first review. It expressed concern at reported racist speech and discrimination against vulnerable groups and noted positive developments in access to quality education and participation for persons with disabilities.

63. Turkey commended Latvia for its achievements in such areas as combating domestic violence and efforts in combating hate crimes, simplifying the naturalization procedures and ensuring social inclusion for vulnerable groups. It welcomed the abolition of the death penalty.

64. Ukraine commended the improvements to the legal framework and reforms of national human rights institutions in order to, inter alia, eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote the rights of minorities. Those changes addressed many recommendations from the first review.

65. The United Arab Emirates recognized the commitment of Latvia to human rights and its many achievements, including the measures taken to promote societal integration. It was concerned at reports of religious and racial discrimination, racially motivated crimes, hate speech and Islamophobia.

66. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland appreciated the progress made, including in the accreditation of the Office of the Ombudsman to the International Coordinating Committee and the amendments in the Citizenship Law that encouraged acquisition of citizenship by children of non-citizens.

67. The United States of America commended Latvia for promoting a tolerant society and its efforts towards the restitution of Jewish communal properties and encouraged further progress in the latter. It urged Latvia to continue to address intolerance against immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees and members of ethnic and religious minorities.

68. Uruguay commended the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and encouraged Latvia to increase its efforts to counter trafficking and to present the outstanding reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

69. Uzbekistan noted with satisfaction such measures as the simplification of naturalization procedures. It noted concerns expressed by the special procedures in areas such as racist discourse, discrimination against Roma and other minorities and the excess use of force by law enforcement officers.

70. Afghanistan noted with appreciation the involvement of non-governmental organizations in interministerial working groups in the drafting of the national report, as well as the incorporation of human rights in educational programmes of the public administration.

71. Algeria appreciated measures taken by Latvia in such areas as social integration. It encouraged Latvia to continue its efforts to eliminate discriminatory practices against women and gender disparities in employment, and to establish guarantees against the arbitrary detention of asylum seekers.

72. Argentina commended Latvia for its ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It considered that Latvia still had to overcome challenges in the fight against discrimination and violence against the lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.

73. Armenia welcomed the efforts of Latvia to promote effective cooperation between States and the special procedures. It appreciated the efforts of Latvia, including in the prevention of crimes against humanity, criminalizing the denial of genocide and simplifying procedures for acquiring citizenship.

74. Australia commended Latvia for its commitment to the abolition of the death penalty and for its efforts in facilitating the naturalisation of non-citizens. However, the number of non-citizens remained large. It noted reports of discrimination against Roma.

75. Bahrain continued to be concerned about reports of the conditions of refugees and asylum seekers, including the reports of the Human Rights Committee about the detention upon arrival of asylum seekers, including children, without legal basis.

76. Belarus appreciated the efforts of Latvia to combat human trafficking and noted that the naturalization process had been simplified although the number of non-citizens remained large. It expressed concern at inadequate responses towards an increase of violence against minorities and racist speech.

77. Brazil noted with appreciation the accession of Latvia to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as amendments made to the Citizenship Law to facilitate the naturalization procedure for children of non-citizens born in Latvia.

78. Bulgaria commended the progress made in gender equality, combating discrimination and protecting persons with disabilities. It appreciated the establishment of a Division of the Rights of Children in the Office of Ombudsman and measures taken to combat domestic violence.

79. Canada commended the simplification of procedures for acquiring Latvian citizenship. It acknowledged the ratification by Latvia of Protocol No. 13 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances.

80. Latvia resumed its responses to the questions it had received and, returning to the issue of integration, it elaborated further on the provision of free Latvian language classes. In relation to the protection of the rights of minorities and minority languages and culture in particular, Latvia also gave details on the provision of education in minority languages. It noted that in 2015 a draft new law was approved by the Government to strengthen the protection of the intangible cultural heritage of national minorities.

81. In relation to integration and naturalization, Latvia provided more information about its efforts to reduce the number of non-citizens.

82. Returning to the fight against hate speech and discrimination, Latvia elaborated upon the amendments to its legislation and the measures related to the investigation of cases. In order to prevent hate speech in public discourse, Latvia reiterated its strong commitment to freedom of speech and provided further information on related developments.

83. In relation to the Roma, Latvia stated that since 2013 there had been no segregated classes for Roma children and the State also funded assistance to help them improve their performance in school.

84. Latvia stated that it had carefully noted the recommendations to ratify additional international human rights instruments and would give them its most serious consideration. It recalled that every person had the right to submit an individual application before the European Court of Human Rights, the rulings of which were legally binding, and emphasized that, according to analysis by the experts of the Council of Europe, there were no judgments of the Court pending the review of implementation that revealed a systematic problem in Latvia or an issue that requiring urgent action. In relation to reporting mechanisms, it acknowledged some delays in submitting national reports, partly due to the economic crisis. Latvia had been working systematically to clear the backlog.

85. Latvia reiterated that all types of domestic violence were already covered by the Criminal Law. In relation to combating hate crime Latvia stated that it was planning to introduce a special term of "vulnerable victim"; persons who have suffered from hate crime would automatically be recognized as "vulnerable victims" and receive specific State help and support.

86. Latvia provided further information with respect to training of the judiciary in human rights and detailed how human rights could only be restricted in limited circumstances under Latvian law.

87. Latvia reaffirmed that it was making ongoing efforts to improve prison conditions and elaborated upon its audit of all prison facilities. The results included the closure of one prison and sections of others and the approval of a comprehensive programme of improvement and renovation, which would continue in 2016. A new prison would also be built in 2019. Latvia stated that it did not suffer from the problem of overcrowding in prisons. Since 2012, prisoners had enjoyed the same health care provision as society in general.

88. Regarding ill-treatment of inmates, Latvia stated that there was a special internal procedure to investigate every accusation of possible ill-treatment. The Investigative Unit had been removed from the prisons and has been subordinated to the Chief for Prison Administration, to ensure neutrality and objective investigation of such cases. All allegations were investigated carefully.

89. Latvia stressed that it had begun the process of drafting a new law on the execution of punishments, which would be in full compliance with all the international and European standards that related to deprivation of the liberty.

90. Latvia reassured the meeting that all refusals of naturalization could be challenged in court.

91. Chile appreciated the efforts made by Latvia to promote and protected human rights by strengthening its civil and criminal legislation, as well as adopting national programmes in matters as asylum, fight against discrimination, gender equality, people trafficking, identity and integration.

92. China noted with satisfaction the adoption of amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code and to the law on a state body to combat corruption. It noted the efforts of Latvia in combating human trafficking and domestic violence and providing protection to victims.

93. Costa Rica commended the abolition of the death penalty and the amendments to the Asylum Law. It expressed concerns about reported cuts to the budgets cut of the Office of the Ombudsman, the lack of sanctions for torture and other issues.

94. The Czech Republic made a statement and recommendations.

95. Denmark commended Latvia for being party to the core international human rights treaties that prohibited torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It noted that Latvia had not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

96. Djibouti noted with satisfaction such measures as the amendments to the Asylum Law. It expressed concern that asylum seekers had been detained in centres in which the conditions had deteriorated and that the principle of refoulement had not been respected by Latvia.

97. Ecuador welcomed the efforts of Latvia since the first review. It was concerned about reports of racist and xenophobic speeches, violence and discrimination against vulnerable groups, members of minorities and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.

98. Egypt welcomed steps taken by Latvia since the last review. It requested further information regarding efforts to address reported concerns in the areas of racism, discrimination against Roma, the rights of "non-citizens", excessive use of force and ill-treatment in police facilities, domestic violence and human trafficking.

99. Estonia commended Latvia for its progress, including in the area of promoting gender equality, in particular the high level of participation of women in political and economic decision-making, in combating trafficking in persons and in the naturalization process.

100. Finland was pleased with the progress of Latvia in relation to non-discrimination, especially awareness-raising on the rights of sexual minorities. It welcomed the efforts to achieve gender equality, the attention paid to maternal health and the steps taken to ensure the rights of the child.

101. France noted with appreciation the strengthening the legal framework to reduce domestic violence and the mandate and resources of the Office of the Ombudsman as well as the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

102. Georgia welcomed the adoption of the amendments to the Citizenship Law, Latvian achievements in women's participation in the decision-making and steps towards improving maternal and child health. It highlighted the accreditation of the Office of the Ombudsman with "A" status.

103. Germany thanked Latvia for its strong engagement with the Council and its commitment to advancing international human rights policy. It appreciated progress since the first review, in particular in the fields of citizenship, societal integration and the penal system.

104. Honduras commended Latvia for the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the amendments to the Asylum Law relating to the processing of asylum applications.

105. Hungary applauded the active and positive role played by Latvia as a member of the Council. It requested more information about how Latvia saw the potential to further increase the inclusion of civil society in the preparation of its national report.

106. Iceland applauded the achievement of Latvia since the first review, including the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and the abolition of the death penalty in law.

107. India welcomed the accreditation of the Office of the Ombudsman with "A" status and urged Latvia to extend adequate resources to it. It encouraged Latvia to continue to pay attention to the high maternal mortality rates; enhance funding for the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking; address hate crimes and discrimination; and work towards more inclusion in education.

108. Indonesia recognized the progress of Latvia in several fields of human rights since the first review and appreciated its initiatives to involve the Office of the Ombudsman Office and non-governmental organization in reviewing the draft of its national report.

109. Iraq appreciated the achievements in passing laws related to immigration and the amendments to the Criminal Law, particularly regarding torture. It welcomed efforts in enacting the nationality law and the increased number of beneficiaries of that law and commended the measures to protect the rights of the child.

110. Ireland welcomed the positive contribution of Latvia through its presidency of the European Council. It welcomed the country's record in confronting gender inequality and encouraged it to take further steps for the elimination of domestic violence, including improving data collection methods.

111. Israel highlighted the measures adopted by Latvia in recent years, including amendments to the legislation relating to obtaining citizenship, the legal capacity of persons with disabilities, combating hate crimes, discrimination and trafficking and persons. It also noted the various plans and guidelines that had been adopted.

112. Ghana noted the reduction in the number of detainees in Latvia since 2013. It was concerned about allegations of the use of excessive use of force and ill-treatment of suspects by law enforcement officials during arrests and investigations and encouraged Latvia to take measures to address the issue.

113. Latvia commenced its concluding responses by providing statistics in answer to further questions on minority education and stated that State support for education in minority languages in Latvia exceeded that provided by most European countries.

114. Latvia stated that it continued to take measures to further improve asylum procedures. It provided details on the rights of asylum seekers under the new law adopted in 2016. It emphasized that the grounds for the detention of illegal migrants were clearly described in law and could only be used as an exceptional measure and were decisions subject to review by the courts.

115. Latvia provided information on persons with disabilities in response to questions from a number of states. The Government had adopted a holistic document for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and action plans had been prepared. Education, employment, social protection and public awareness had been defined as priorities of the policies in Latvia. There were also individual support mechanisms for children with special needs.

116. Latvia stressed that in 1999 it was the first country in Eastern and Central Europe to elect a female president and that the current Prime Minister was a women, as were 4 of the 12 ministers.

117. In conclusion, Latvia expressed its gratitude to all delegations that had actively participated in the interactive dialogue. It appreciated the comments, questions and recommendations which had been received. Latvia would consider all the recommendations in good faith and in a careful and thorough manner.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations**

118. **The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue/listed below have been examined by Latvia and enjoy the support of Latvia:**

118.1 **Prioritise the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic Violence and continue efforts to combat domestic violence, including through actions aimed at raising public awareness on this issue (Italy);**

118.2 **Sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Turkey);**

118.3 **Consider accession to the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Estonia);**

118.4 **Adopt comprehensive legislation on violence against women and domestic violence as criminal offences; investigate reports of domestic violence and prosecute perpetrators (Lithuania);**

118.5 **Continue to review its national legislation with a view to address the concerns expressed by some treaty bodies concerning the criminalization of domestic violence (Nicaragua);**

118.6 **Strengthen existing law and practice to counteract trafficking in human beings for sexual and labour exploitation, particularly of young women (Poland);**

118.7 **Strengthen the implementation of criminal law provisions aimed at combating racially motivated crimes (United Arab Emirates);**

118.8 **Implement provisions of criminal legislation aimed at combating racially motivated crimes and prosecute those responsible, as well as increase awareness among persons belonging to national minorities about the means available for legal protection from discrimination and hatred (Belarus);**

118.9 **Improve domestic mechanisms for the implementation of its international obligations in the field of human rights (Tajikistan);**

118.10 **Strengthen the national mechanism on gender equality (Italy);**

118.11 **Strengthen the Ombudsman's capacity to investigate and act on allegations of discriminations in all its forms (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

118.12 **Further improve the judiciary system of the country and strengthen human rights education for its citizens, especially judicial personnel (China);**

** The conclusions and recommendations have not been edited.

118.13 Organise training courses relating to hate crimes for officers of law enforcement and the judicial system and raise public awareness about hate crimes to encourage them to report them (Saudi Arabia);

118.14 Promote greater human rights understanding through relevant programmes that inculcate respect, tolerance and intercultural understanding (Malaysia);

118.15 Foster mutual understanding between all nationalities and all racial, ethnic and religious representatives or groups through tolerance as interaction between nations and cultures is based on the existence of respect towards cultural, ethnic, religious, racial, social and other characteristics (Tajikistan);

118.16 Continue to promote and implement policies of tolerance and inclusion and for the participation of all citizens in the society which contribute to combating discrimination in all its forms (Nicaragua);

118.17 Develop and implement public awareness campaigns and education programs to promote diversity and inclusion, while combatting racism, xenophobia and homophobia (Canada);

118.18 Continue strengthening programmes for combating xenophobia, discrimination and violence motivated by the sexual orientation and gender identity of the victims (Chile);

118.19 Engage civil society in the follow-up implementation process of the UPR recommendations (Poland);

118.20 Increase its capacity to provide timely reporting to treaty bodies in accordance with its international obligations (Czech Republic);

118.21 Intensify cooperation with the United Nations treaty bodies by submitting overdue national periodic reports to appropriate committees in the near future (Uzbekistan);

118.22 Submit its national report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which is overdue since 2007 (Belarus);

118.23 Implement criminal law provisions aimed at combating racially motivated crimes and punishing perpetrators (South Africa);

118.24 Intensify efforts to combat hate speech (Iraq);

118.25 Continue its efforts at the international level in preventing genocide and crimes against humanities (Armenia);

118.26 Continue and enhance its efforts to ensure the full implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Indonesia);

118.27 Step up efforts to ensure the basic human rights of all detainees by improving the material condition in prison facilities and police detention centres as well as investigating cases regarding ill-treatment and violence in prisons and conducting trainings for prison officers (Republic of Korea);

118.28 Continue efforts to address the issue of overcrowded prisons and take action to improve the conditions in prisons and detention centres (Sweden);

118.29 Improve conditions in detention and prison facilities, including by increasing living space and improving access to healthcare services for detainees (Czech Republic);

118.30 Adopt the measures required to combat all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence and violence in marriage, both in law and in practice (Paraguay);

118.31 Continue taking steps to actively prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence (Estonia);

118.32 Step up efforts to enforce anti-trafficking legislation (Philippines);

118.33 Ensure the application of the legislation against trafficking in persons for purposes of labour and sexual exploitation, by undertaking the greatest efforts for the identification, protection and rehabilitation of victims and the investigation and prosecution of those responsible (Uruguay);

118.34 Take clear measures to combat trafficking in persons, particularly trafficking of women and children for the purpose of forced labour and sexual trade (Bahrain);

118.35 Reinforce measures to prevent trafficking in human beings, provide effective support and redress to victims, investigate and prosecute offenders (Bulgaria);

118.36 Continue to strengthen enforcement of anti-trafficking legislation by investigating and prosecuting offenders, while also reinforcing the mechanisms of support, rehabilitation, protection and redress for victims (Canada);

118.37 Investigate and prosecute crimes of trafficking in persons and provide effective support and rehabilitation for the victims (Egypt);

118.38 Strengthen all existing mechanisms within its institutional infrastructure to prevent and combat trafficking in persons by allocating human, technical and financial resources; and ensure comprehensive care and adequate reparation to victims (Honduras);

118.39 Implement reforms to reduce processing times for judicial cases and reduce perceptions of unfairness in the judicial system (United States of America);

118.40 Provide protection for the family as the natural and fundamental unit of the society (Egypt);

118.41 Guarantee freedom of expression, of the press and opinion, including by effectively investigating cases of attacks against journalists (Bulgaria);

118.42 Develop a national action plan with concrete goals to tackle the gender pay gap (Slovenia);

118.43 Draw up and implement specific measures to avoid gender-based segregation in employment, including through equal pay for equal work for men and women (Mexico);

118.44 Eliminate the pay gap between men and women (Algeria);

118.45 Take action to narrow the gender pay gap and to ensure equal opportunities for women on the labour market (Israel);

118.46 Continue efforts aimed at reduction of the maternal mortality rate (Georgia);

118.47 Increase access to technical services for persons with disabilities, with appropriate support from regional institutions (Jamaica);

118.48 Further develop policies to ensure the full enjoyment of rights of persons with disabilities, particularly in terms of inclusive education and accessibility (Israel);

118.49 Continue to take measures in order to protect the rights of national minorities and their social integration (Armenia);

118.50 Support the teaching of minorities' languages and cultures in minority schools (Kyrgyzstan);

118.51 Pay further efforts to elaborate on the education of minority languages and cultures (Hungary);

118.52 Undertake further analysis of the high percentage of Roma Children in special education schools in light of the principles of the Council of Europe and the jurisprudence of the European Convention on Human Rights (Norway);

118.53 Take further concrete and effective steps towards social inclusion for Romani people, such as strengthening Latvia's human rights framework and providing human rights training to law enforcement authorities in order to increase protections for Romani people against violations of their human rights (Australia);

118.54 Continue strengthening programmes for the integration of national minorities, including the Roma, in order to ensure their economic social and cultural rights (Chile);

118.55 Continue efforts to reduce the number of non-citizens (Kyrgyzstan);

118.56 Strengthen efforts to encourage the naturalisation of eligible non-citizens (United States of America);

118.57 Undertake targeted outreach activities to ensure that interested "non-citizens" are informed and encouraged to apply for naturalization, and provide free state language training when necessary (Norway);

118.58 Adopt legal and administrative measures in order to guarantee the basic rights to asylum seekers and refugees, in particular rights which allow them the access to health assistance services (Argentina);

118.59 Ensure that conditions of reception centres of asylum seekers are in line with international standards (Djibouti);

118.60 Take further measures to improve the condition of the reception centres for asylum seekers and ensure asylum seekers have access to adequate standard of living (Afghanistan);

118.61 Ensure the registration of all newly born children so as to continue reducing the number of adult non-citizens (Mexico).

119. The following recommendations enjoy the support of Latvia, which considers that they are already implemented or in the process of implementation:

119.1 Sign and ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Hungary);

119.2 Build on efforts to address all forms of violence against women by enacting specific laws that prohibit domestic and sexual violence, including intimate partner violence, and by investigating all allegations of violence,

prosecuting perpetrators, and ensuring victims are protected and have access to medical and legal services (Canada);

119.3 **Strengthen ongoing efforts against domestic violence, including by adopting comprehensive legislation that would establish specific offences in this realm, and by establishing adequate monitoring and investigative mechanisms (Turkey);**

119.4 **Make efforts to adopt comprehensive legislation on violence against women with provisions on domestic violence and marital rape as specific offences in the Criminal Law and punish perpetrators as well as provide assistance and recovery for victims (Republic of Korea);**

119.5 **Pass legislation which qualifies domestic violence and spousal rape as crimes (Costa Rica);**

119.6 **Incorporate the definition of torture into the criminal code in conformity with the standards in the Convention against Torture (Paraguay);**

119.7 **Ensure the conformity of the definition of torture in criminal law with the Convention against Torture, that the crime of torture is not subject to the statute of limitations and that the detention facilities are subject to monitoring by impartial and independent mechanisms (Egypt);**

119.8 **Define incitement to violence on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity as a criminal offence (South Africa) (Iceland);**

119.9 **Take measures to strengthen the role and capacity of the Ombudsman to address issues such as non-discrimination (Namibia);**

119.10 **Provide the office of the Ombudsman with the human and financial resources necessary for it to exercise its mandate in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Portugal);**

119.11 **Ensure that all allegations of torture and ill-treatment are investigated by an independent mechanism, and that alleged perpetrators are effectively prosecuted (Turkey);**

119.12 **Implement the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment's recommendation on offering at least 4 m^2 per prisoner in multi-occupancy cells (Norway);**

119.13 **Take the necessary steps to ensure that persons with disabilities have adequate means to participate in politics, especially in the electoral process (Thailand).**

120. **The following recommendations will be examined by Latvia which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the thirty-second session of the Human Rights Council in June 2016:**

120.1 **Recognize the competence of Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and consider communications from individuals (South Africa);**

120.2 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Portugal) (South Africa);**

120.3 **Accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Turkey);**

120.4 **Consider ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and take measures in order to combat discrimination against women (Namibia);**

120.5 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Mexico) (South Africa);**

120.6 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Ireland);**

120.7 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (France);**

120.8 **Consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment as well as other remaining key international human rights documents (Ukraine);**

120.9 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Montenegro) (Pakistan) (Poland) (South Africa) (Costa Rica) (Ecuador) (Honduras);**

120.10 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Morocco);**

120.11 **Ratify Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (France);**

120.12 **Intensify its efforts to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Denmark);**

120.13 **Incorporate the Convention against Torture into the national legislation and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (Lithuania);**

120.14 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and establish an Independent National Preventive Mechanism, in compliance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture requirements (Liechtenstein);**

120.15 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and establish without delay a national preventive mechanism in accordance with the Protocol (Czech Republic);**

120.16 **Consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and establish a National Preventive Mechanism (Republic of Moldova);**

120.17 **Sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (Germany);**

120.18 **Ratify as soon as possible the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Portugal);**

120.19 **Take measures towards the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (Georgia);**

120.20 **Accede to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Uruguay);**

120.21 **Consider its accession to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Member of Their Families (Indonesia);**

120.22 **Consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Philippines);**

120.23 **Move towards the ratification of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (Chile);**

120.24 **Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Kyrgyzstan) (Ghana) (Mexico) (Pakistan) (Ecuador) (Honduras);**

120.25 **Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Algeria);**

120.26 **Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Egypt);**

120.27 **Continue its efforts to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Morocco);**

120.28 **Accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Uruguay);**

120.29 **Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Italy) (Montenegro) (Ghana);**

120.30 **Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and recognise the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (France);**

120.31 **Assess the possibility of lifting its reservations to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Germany);**

120.32 **Consider ratifying ILO Convention No. 189 (Philippines);**

120.33 **Address the fragmentation of anti-discrimination provisions in its legislation by adopting a robust and comprehensive anti-discrimination law (Czech Republic);**

120.34 **Adopt a law to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women (Israel);**

120.35 **Improve the relevant legislation to further combat racial discrimination and incitement to racial hatred in order to effectively protect the rights of ethnic minorities (Iceland);**

120.36 **Enact legislation that defines the line between freedom of expression and hate speech (Saudi Arabia);**

120.37 **Improve the relevant laws to further combat racial discrimination and hate speech in order to protect effectively the rights of non-citizens residing in Latvia and minority groups (China);**

120.38 **Amend national legislation in order to include hate crimes and domestic violence and take effective measures to ensure equal access to employment, social security, inclusion and equal opportunities for all people, especially for members of minorities. These measures should also facilitate the regularization of non-citizens, avoid discrimination arising from a lack of knowledge of the official language and offer alternatives which foster inclusion and cohesion in society, in particular in the education system (Ecuador);**

120.39 **Consider as a crime all acts of violence, regardless of the harm that they cause, in addition to specifically punishing violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Spain);**

120.40 **Amend legal prohibition on incitement to hatred to include prohibitions on the basis of sexual orientation (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

120.41 **Consider legislative and administrative measures to combat violence on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation (United States of America);**

120.42 **Adopt legislation that explicitly recognizes homophobic and transphobic motivation for a criminal offence as an aggravating circumstance in its criminal law (Finland);**

120.43 **Take legal and administrative measures to improve the treatment of asylum seekers in order to establish safeguards against their arbitrary detention (Costa Rica);**

120.44 **Adopt integrated legislation consistent with its international obligations, that addresses the issue of discrimination and ensures the full integration of vulnerable groups, in particular immigrants and persons belonging to linguistic minorities in all spheres (Honduras);**

120.45 **Bring the nationality legislation into compliance with the provisions of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Kenya);**

120.46 **Develop and implement a National Action Plan for Human Rights to further ensure a systematic and comprehensive approach to the promotion and protection of human rights; the Government of Latvia is encouraged to engage civil society in the process (Indonesia);**

120.47 **Adopt a National Action Plan to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Netherlands);**

120.48 **Establish specific initiatives and policies aimed at combating all forms of xenophobia racism and hate aimed at foreigners, particularly Muslims (Saudi Arabia);**

120.49 **Implement public awareness campaigns to promote tolerance and respect for cultural diversity and to counter prejudice, stereotypes, discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia (United Arab Emirates);**

120.50 **Ensure that diversity is actively pursued in school curricula through awareness-raising activities in order to eliminate discrimination against minorities, especially lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (Finland);**

120.51 **Verify the impact of the amendments of the educational law relating to the mandate to "morally educate children in compliance with the values of the constitution" on the realization of human rights, in particular women's**

rights, rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and freedom of expression (Germany);

120.52 **Consider the creation of a national system for the monitoring of the follow-up to recommendations relating to human rights (Paraguay);**

120.53 **Continue to pay attention to all aspects of gender equality, in particular to the recommendations of the working group established by the Gender Equality Committee on the integration of gender equality aspects into process and content of all educational levels until 2020 (Romania);**

120.54 **Work towards implementing resolution 16/18 of the Human Rights Council concerning combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief (Bahrain);**

120.55 **Continue its efforts in countering racist discourse in politics and in the media, fighting racially motivated crimes, and eliminating violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Thailand);**

120.56 **Strengthen measures to counter the use of racist discourse in politics and in the media (United Arab Emirates);**

120.57 **Actively combat racially-motivated crimes and counteract racist speech in politics and the mass media (Uzbekistan);**

120.58 **Enhance its efforts aimed at preventing and combating and bringing to justice perpetrators of hate crimes, as well as acts of racism, xenophobia and discrimination against vulnerable groups, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals (Brazil);**

120.59 **Prohibit the holding of the annual gathering in March in the centre of Riga in a memory of soldiers who fought in the Latvian legion of the Waffen SS as well as condemn strictly any attempts to glorify the memory of those who fought in the Waffen SS and collaborated with Nazis (Russian Federation);**

120.60 **Continue efforts to prevent racist speech, violence and discrimination against vulnerable groups, including Roma, by fighting racially motivated crimes and countering the use of racist discourse in politics and the media (Republic of Korea);**

120.61 **Raise public awareness of hate speech against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and take steps to increase reporting of hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons (Norway);**

120.62 **Adopt measures to promote equality of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and end discrimination against them regard (France);**

120.63 **Introduce legislation that recognises the diversity of forms of partnerships and that provides same sex couples with the same rights and social security as couples of the opposite sex, as previously recommended (Netherlands);**

120.64 **Deepen actions against discrimination and violence suffered by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons; in particular, ensure access to courts as well as the investigation and punishment of these acts; and strengthen the assistance provided to victims (Argentina);**

120.65 **Prepare an appropriate normative framework for mental health institutions and social care facilities, ensuring that it prohibits the non-consensual use of coercive practices such as psychiatric medication or electroconvulsive therapy (Spain);**

120.66 **Continue its efforts of adhering to international legal instruments in the field of human rights, inter alia, to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Romania);**

120.67 **Increase the number and capacity of shelters for women who are victims of violence and ensure that victims receive adequate assistance, including psychosocial counselling (Liechtenstein);**

120.68 **Ensure that all processing of personal data and all State surveillance activities be in line with international human rights law and do not infringe on citizen's fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to privacy (Liechtenstein);**

120.69 **Ensure that the operations of intelligence agencies are monitored by an independent oversight mechanism to ensure transparency and accountability (Liechtenstein);**

120.70 **Promote responsible freedom of expression and effectively use the Cyber Security Strategy of Latvia 2014-2018 as a platform to combat hate crimes in the virtual environment (Malaysia);**

120.71 **Put an end to cases of politically-motivated persecution of human rights defenders who advocate for the rights of minorities or the closure or suspension of mass media and restrictions on access to various sources of information for the population (Russian Federation);**

120.72 **Promote better political representation of women in elected positions (Costa Rica);**

120.73 **Meet the provision of technical facilities as laid down requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Pakistan);**

120.74 **Promote greater societal integration of minorities within the education system through intercultural, interethnic, and interreligious dialogue (Malaysia);**

120.75 **Take all measures that guarantee the representation of minorities in social and political areas (Saudi Arabia);**

120.76 **Ensure inclusive education, taking all the measures required to end cases of segregation of children belonging to ethnic minorities in schools (Uruguay);**

120.77 **Ensure full realisation of the rights of "non-citizen" residents and of members belonging to linguistic minorities and contribute to their integration in society (Russian Federation);**

120.78 **Remove disproportionate restrictions, such as those identified by the Human Rights Committee, on non-citizens and provide for the possibility of judicial review of all refusals of naturalisation (Ireland);**

120.79 **Introduce the automatic acquisition of citizenship together with birth registration for children of foreign parents whose nationality cannot be passed**

to them, and facilitate the possibility of judicial review for all naturalisation applications which are denied (Spain);

120.80 **Take further legal, political and practical measures to reduce the phenomenon of non-citizens (Belarus);**

120.81 **Simplify the process of naturalisation of "non-citizens" living in the country for decades (Russian Federation);**

120.82 **Further facilitate the acquisition of citizenship by individuals born in the country who are children of non-citizens (Brazil);**

120.83 **Continue to take further steps to improve the environment for naturalisation as well as ensure the protection of social and political rights of non-citizens (Australia);**

120.84 **Further facilitate the granting of citizenship to children of non-citizen parents who do not acquire any other nationality (Germany);**

120.85 **Ensure the full enjoyment of rights of non-citizen residents and linguistic minorities and facilitate their integration into society (Bulgaria);**

120.86 **Guarantee the funding of institutions which promote tolerance and the smooth integration of foreigners (Mexico);**

120.87 **Adopt clear measures to guarantee the rights of all refugees and asylum seekers and protection, and not to classify them and arrest them as illegal immigrants (Bahrain);**

120.88 **Ensure that all persons requesting asylum in Latvia enjoy all procedural guarantees and that decisions on asylum, including those made under accelerated procedures, can be appealed and suspended to avoid the risk of refoulement (Djibouti);**

120.89 **Integrate the refugees into society as a matter of necessity through combatting stereotypes that inflame hatred feelings towards them in the society (Libya);**

120.90 **Facilitate the integration of refugees, including by combating stereotypes, prejudice and hate speech (Egypt);**

120.91 **Facilitate the integration of refugees by combating stereotypes (India);**

120.92 **Refrain from refouling or expelling persons to another state when there are grounds to believe they will be subject to torture (Djibouti);**

120.93 **Develop an adequate identification mechanism for vulnerable persons and grant free legal aid from the beginning of the asylum procedure (Slovenia);**

120.94 **Ensure that detained asylum seekers have access to public health services on an equal footing with other detainees who have been arrested or convicted (Portugal);**

120.95 **Guarantee that hate to foreigners and racial and religious extremism are not obstacles in dealing with refugees and asylum seekers (Bahrain);**

120.96 **Provide "non-citizens" with equal access to employment, education, health care, and social welfare, as well as take into account their interests in the conclusion of international treaties and agreements (Russian Federation).**

121. The recommendations below did not enjoy the support of Latvia and would thus be noted:

121.1 Implement public policies which guarantee to members of linguistic minorities the enjoyment of all their human rights, including the revision of the Law on Languages and the repeal of those articles which might impair their rights (Paraguay);

121.2 Review the law on state language, which discriminates against linguistic minorities in access to the labour market and ensure that appeals from those who do not master the Latvian language sufficiently are considered by state bodies, through providing them an opportunity to use their mother tongue before state bodies (Russian Federation);

121.3 Provide the opportunity to use personal names, place names, street names and other geographical indications in minority languages, as well as enabling the contact with the authorities in minority language on the territories where a significant part of the population belongs to those minorities (Hungary).

122. All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.

Annex

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Latvia was headed by H. E. Mr. Andrejs Pildegovičs, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia and composed of the following members:

- Mr. Jānis Citskovskis – Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia
- Ms. Dace Dalbiņa – Deputy Director, Latvian Language Agency
- Mr. Rolands Ezergailis – First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia to the United Nations Office in Geneva
- H.E. Mr Jānis Kārkliņš – Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia to the United Nations Office in Geneva
- Ms. Anita Kleinberga – Head of Social Integration and Civil Society Development Division, Department of Social Integration, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia
- Mr. Uldis Lielpēters –Deputy State Secretary for International Affairs, Integration and Media Issues, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia
- Ms. Kristīne Līce – Representative of Latvia before International Human Rights Organisations
- Ms. Laila Medina – Deputy State Secretary on Sectoral Policy, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Latvia
- Ms. Evija Papule - Deputy State Secretary, Head of Education Department, Ministry of Education and Science
- Ms. Inese Rudzīte – Legal Advisor, Criminal Justice Department, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Latvia
- Mr. Gatis Švika – Deputy Head of the Central Administrative Department, Head of Cooperation and Development Bureau, State Police of Latvia
- Ms. Ineta Tāre – Head of International Cooperation and EU Policy Department, Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia
- Mr. Dimitrijs Trofimovs – Deputy State Secretary, Head of Sectoral Policy Department, Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia
- Ms. Alise Zālīte – Senior Desk Officer, Human Rights Division, International Organizations and Human Rights Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia